

THE VIEW

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A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Word and Sacrament

Word and Sacrament. You have likely heard this phrase so frequently in Lutheran Churches that it may feel a bit cliché. Lutheran pastors sound like broken records as they insert this into sermons and bible studies, and while this may come across as pastoral Tourette's, I assure you that it is very intentional. Word and Sacraments are the means by which God has promised to deliver his grace. The forgiveness, love, and favor of God, for the sake of His beloved Son are guaranteed to be found here. His Word reveals the Father to us through his Son, and it is by the hearing of the Word that the Holy Spirit creates a saving faith in Christ within us. The preaching and hearing of God's Word is a fundamental aspect of the Lutheran Church, and likewise, so is the reception of the forgiveness and grace that are promised in God's Word through the outward means of the Sacraments.

This month, as we continue to examine the Augsburg Confession, we focus on Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments, which states:

Of the Use of the Sacraments they [Lutheran Churches] teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments. They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

While the Lutheran Reformers acknowledge that participation in the Sacraments does have an element of public agreement of doctrine with the local congregation and does have direct command

to from Scripture for the Christian to take part in the rites that Christ instituted, the emphasis of the Sacrament is not on the obedience or declaration of man, but rather it is a confirmation of God's will to save and redeem us. God is the primary actor in the Sacrament as He delivers, through established means, what He has promised. Man is both strengthened and deepened in his faith and he believes and takes to heart God's declaration. Therefore, there is no benefit to man if he merely goes through the motions apart from faith. Faith receives the forgiveness and grace that the Sacraments promise. Although man does profess his faith through participation in the Sacrament, he is ultimately passive in the reception of what God is doing through this holy act.

When the Lutherans presented this article at the Diet of Augsburg, their Roman adversaries essentially agreed with them the Sacraments are not only public profession of faith, but are more rightly understood as signs and testimonies of God's will toward us. They actually do something as they move our hearts to believe and deliver what they promise. In this respect, Lutherans are closer to the Roman Church and Eastern Church than they are to other "Protestants," who interpret the Sacraments as a symbolic act by which men demonstrate fealty to a congregation or confession. There was, however, some disagreement when the Roman Church presented their confutation of the Article because they wanted the Lutherans to expand their list of Sacraments to the traditional seven Sacraments that Rome observed. (Lutherans acknowledged Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution as Sacraments, whereas, Rome acknowledged Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confession, Marriage, Ordination, Confirmation, and Extreme Unction as Sacraments.)

In response, the Lutherans, who did not abolish the other rites, clarified that they could not rightly call the others Sacraments because they did not contain the command of God to which the promise of grace had been added. By this definition, only Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution could truly be considered a Sacrament. In each of these, Scripture firmly assures us that when we are Baptized, when we eat the Body of Christ and drink His Blood, when we trust God's declaration of Absolution, then we truly receive God's forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, and faith is conceived within us.

To the contrary, the other rites handed down through tradition, such as Confirmation and Extreme Unction (a.k.a. Last Rites), do not have a direct command from Scripture. They are good practices, and they certainly have a place in the Church, but it would be wrong to suggest that they hold the same status as Baptism or the Lord's Supper, when God never promised His grace through them. The same can be said of Ordination and Marriage. Both were instituted by Scripture, but neither create faith, nor do they forgive sins.

Finally, since their opponents seemed to have glossed over it, in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, the Lutherans more firmly denounced the conferring of grace in the Sacraments *ex opere operato* (by the work worked). Then and now it is commonly taught by the Roman Church that the act itself, even apart from faith, is efficacious. A Sacrament is effective because of the One who makes the promise in it, but the promise present in the Sacrament is useless unless it is received by faith. If Grandpa and Grandma secretly get their grandchild baptized because the child's parents are unbelievers, the promise is there in the Baptism, but what good is it if that child never hears the Gospel, never has that faith nourished, never knows that the promise was even made or what it means. The Sacraments are salvific because they create and sustain faith, but if that faith is left to wither and die, then the promise avails nothing. Christ instituted the Sacraments

for the purpose of delivering confidence in one's salvation by grace through faith, and not as a false sense of security for an unbeliever.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ, and it is faith that justifies. Whether through the hearing of the Word or the reception of a Sacrament, the effect is the same. A Sacrament provides the same promise of forgiveness and faith as the proclaimed Word because a Sacrament is a tangible manifestation of the Word that we receive with all our senses. Our ears hear the promise; our eyes see the elements and our skin touches them; our noses smell their aroma and our mouths even taste that the Lord is good as a testimony to their veracity.

While it may be true that Lutheran Pastors sound like a broken record as they repeatedly point to Word and Sacrament, they have good reason to champion them at every possible opportunity. This is where the redemptive work of Christ is applied directly to His people, providing both the promise and the guarantee of grace as our hearts are moved to believe God's Word and the absolution of our sins is given.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Mt. Pisgah,

As we progress through this solemn Lenten season, don't forget our Wednesday services at 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM. We continue to be reminded of the love Jesus showed us through his birth, life, death, and resurrection. We can't hear this often enough.

At our February 19 church council meeting we:

- Reviewed the **financial reports** from the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- Received **reports** of the boards and committees.
- Heard that David White is working with the **youth of the church** helping them learn how the church operates.
- Approved the purchase and installation of a **smart TV in the kitchen**. This will allow the workers preparing for meals and other gatherings following the service on Sunday to see and hear the service if they can't be in the sanctuary.
- Received reports on the **Missions of the Month**: The January MOM, the Rescue Mission, received \$310. The MOM for February is the Souper Bowl of Caring for IAM and March will be Special Olympics.
- Learned that assembly of **Poke Bags** for shut-ins has been changed to March 18 and that there will be an **Easter brunch** following worship on March 31.
- Heard that there will be a **spring cleanup** work day in March. Stay tuned for the date!

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, March 18, at 7:00 in the church library.

Barbara Volk

Outreach and Community Concerns

Mission of the Month

Special Olympics

Our Mission

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics aims to combine high quality sports with a wide audience, and be a driving force for social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

The SOUPER bowl dollars totaled **\$586** for the IAM this month. Plus, we donated **142 pounds** of canned goods/food.

Prayer List

Long Term Illness

Robert Kish (Mincer)
Cynthia M. (Lundquist)
Michael Terzian (Keeney)
Brian Keeney

Joyce (Kruse)
Brenda Ridgeway (Amato)
Gretchen Sweetser
(Mincer)

Mary Coffman (Coffman)
Annette & Jim Bodden
(Heaphy)

Surgeries and Illness

David Walters
Mikki Reinicker
Steven Bush (Kaufman)
Lyn Heiple
Sarah Christensen
Tom Berryman
Daniel Bush (Kaufman)
Marianne Bugner
Albert Bugner

Marjorie Zell
David Moore (Gonzalez)
Dewayne Grooms
(Gonzalez)
Jackie Fry
Madeline Biddle
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

Betty Ude
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)

Karen Ude

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
Christopher, Nicole, James, Wyatt Duncan (medical issues)
Vaughn Family (medical issues)
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)
Adam and Emile Nieting (Seminararian)

Parish Life

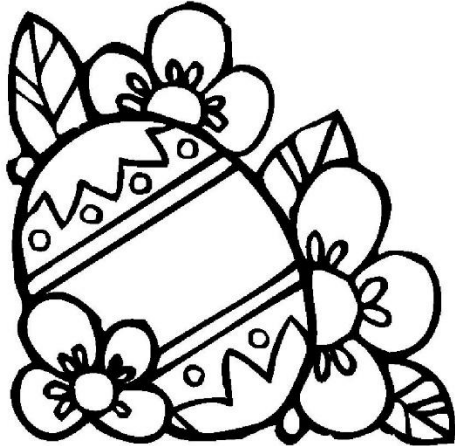
Easter Brunch

We hope that all of you will join in for the meal on Easter Sunday, which will be held right after the church service on March 31st. The sign up for the Easter Brunch will be in the Narthex starting March 10th. The menu will include egg casseroles, other egg dishes, sausage, fresh fruit and coffee cakes. There will also be coffee and juices. If you have any questions, please contact Debby Zagone at (630) 363-3645 or email debbyzagone@gmail.com.

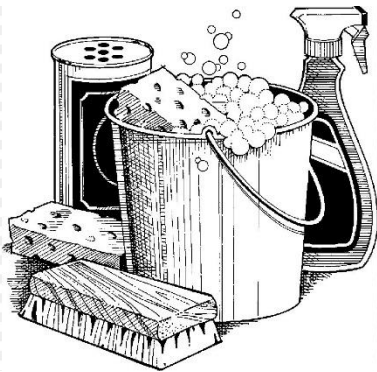
Poke Bags for the Homebound

Parish Life will also be putting together Poke Bags for homebound members on March 18th at 10 am. The Poke Bags are sent out at Easter and Christmas. These bags let the members know that even though they are not able to join us on Sundays, we are still thinking of them. Each poke bag will usually contain a seasonal card, puzzle book/ journal/small note pad, prayer cards/short devotion, a pen, cookies, a savory snack and a few pieces of candy. If anyone is able to bake cookies or make individual small servings of a savory snack, please contact Debby Zagone at (630) 363-3645, or email debbyzagone@gmail.com.

Board of Christian Education



Looking ahead to our March 31st Easter celebration, the Board of Christian Education plans to distribute treat bags to our children and youth, as well as planning an Easter egg hunt and other activities. If your Easter plans include young family members and visitors, please provide us with their names and ages so that no one goes home empty-handed. We will gratefully accept offers to help supervise the activities. And...we will be happy to accept any contributions for the treat bags.



Looking a little further ahead, work days are scheduled at Camp Linn Haven to get the grounds and facilities ready for another summer of Christian fellowship and fun. Those dates are April 20, 27 and May 4, 11, 18. Mt. Pisgah is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the interior of Cabin 17. This year's efforts will probably include painting the bathroom. Offers to help with this particular project will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Linda Licht if you would like first-hand experience with this ministry.

Birthday Blessings

03/03 Sharon Gertken

03/09 Zoe Christensen

03/19 Lindsay Middleton

03/03 Lyn Heiple

03/14 Donna Watkins

03/24 Mariana Luecke

Thank you

Betty Ude would like to thank the groups that have brought her goodies and to all for the prayers on her behalf. She is very grateful to everyone.

Preschool Bible Time



March Blessings

Outreach to Henderson County Seniors

Please join us in March to share the joy of Easter with some of our county's Seniors. We will be putting together Easter table favors at our meeting on Monday, March 11 at 1 pm. Each favor will include a LWML devotion, candy, and a game. We need to make 45 of these favors, so many hands will be needed!

These will be delivered to First Methodist where the daily Congregate Dining lunch is provided by the Council on Aging.

Carolinas District Joy Event

Messiah Lutheran Church in Charlotte will be hosting this year's Joy Event on **Saturday, April 13**. Please see the hallway bulletin board for all the details and registration form. Kathy will be unable to attend this year but would like to hear from anyone who is interested in attending.

LWML Sunday, April 21

The Ladies Guild will be hosting LWML Sunday on April 21. During the Sunday School hour, the children will be participating in the “Resurrection Parade” skit and refreshments will be provided. Information about LWML mission projects will be available. Bring your loose change to the church service for our “noisy collection” to be sent to LWML for mission projects support. Ladies Guild ladies will be serving as lectors, ushers, and greeters on this Sunday during the church service as we “Serve the Lord with Gladness”!

Rummage Sale, Saturday June 1

Start collecting your items now to bring to our annual rummage sale. This event helps pay for many local and national mission projects throughout the year. More details will be provided when we get closer to the sale date.

Property News

New Sign and New Line !



We thank God for His help in getting our digital sign and waterline replaced. He sent us excellent professionals who did the work quickly while respecting our property. Superior LED Displays & Custom Signs provided us with high-grade environmental-proof light panels that have higher resolution at cost. Superior is a Christian company. Thank you Harry, Chance, and Aaron!

The highly respected T. P. Howard's Plumbing company sent out a hard working crew to lay almost 500 feet of PEX pipe (1 inch inner diameter). They spent a week digging trenches and boring under the driveway, playground, and sidewalks. They also installed 2 outside shutoff valves. This pipe should last us for several decades. Thank you Josh Howard and crew!

Finally, thank you Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church voting members for approving these 2 much needed projects! Your ongoing patience and support during the past several months also greatly helped me deal with the details. You are the best!

Respectfully,

Bill Paris, Outdoor Properties

SPRING YARD CARE DAYS: SATURDAY MARCH 16 & 23

Please join us for some outside fun as we take care of the little piece of creation God has given to us. We will be together from **9am to Noon** on both of these days. We have much to do where the new waterline was installed. Bring your own gloves and tools such as rakes, shovels, and trimming tools. Please sign-up on the board in the Narthex. If you have any landscaping or planting ideas, please contact Bill Paris. (828-595-5622)

STILL RELEVANT

Every Easter I find myself at a loss for words—I just don't have words good enough to express what I feel about what God did for us on that happy resurrection morning. Since I can't find the words I need, I'm borrowing them from Martin Luther's prayer on Easter Sunday, 1533. (The formatting and emphasis are an adaptation from <https://nwamotherlode.com/devotion-in-motion-just-plain-john/>)

Almighty God,
Who through the death of Thy Son hast destroyed sin and death,
And through His resurrection hast restored innocence and eternal life
That we, being delivered from the power of the devil,
May live in Thy kingdom,
Grant that we may believe this with our whole heart
And steadfast in this faith, ever praise and thank Thee,
Through Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Grant, dear Lord God,
That the blessed Day of Thy holy advent may come soon,
So that we may be redeemed
From this bad, wicked world
(The devil's dominion)
And freed from the terrible plague that we must suffer
From without and within
(From wicked people and our own conscience.)
Do Thou dispatch this old maggot sack
That we may finally get a different body,
Which is not full of sin,
Inclined to unchasteness and to everything evil
(As this present one is)
But one that is redeemed from all bodily and spiritual misery
And made like unto Thy glorious body, dear Lord Jesus Christ,
That we may at last come to our glorious redemption.
Amen.

Board of Missions

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:3)

Haiti Mission Memory Lane

The Mission Board had the joy of meeting with Krista Young who is a Mission Advocate for LCMS at our February meeting. Krista shared her background and role in missions for LCMS. She showed the committee the numerous opportunities for mission work and the resources LCMS provides to help connect the church at large with spreading the Gospel in the mission field.

As part of that discussion, we gave Krista the history and administration oversight of Mt. Pisgah's Haiti mission which we are summarizing below. To God be the glory for our past and future efforts in Haiti!

In 2010 after the earthquake, LCMS sent many medical teams to Port-au-Prince to help relieve human suffering. A pastor from Wendy White's home church joined one of these teams and met a pastor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) which is in fellowship with LCMS. This pastor was Pastor Walta Clercius who took the team out into the Mission field, away from the coast, up into the mountains, which was a three-hour drive from Port-au-Prince.

At that time believers were worshipping under a tarp in a field in the mountains of Haiti, the Central Plateau, as people fled the cities along the coast due to the thousands of aftershocks from the earthquake that killed an estimated 220,000 people. Lutheran Churches in Catawba County worked together to fund building a church in Laotchikit. Wendy White met Pastor Clercius in Conover, NC at her home church in 2012 when he came to the US to speak to the congregation and she was moved to visit the village of Laotchikit with a mission team. Other members of Mt. Pisgah joined future mission trips to the Central Plateau. Each person saw a need and acted to help relieve various types of suffering.

There was a small school in the church but no pay for the teachers. Mt. Pisgah started by supporting a few teachers, and adding cooks and a gatekeeper. Trinity Hope in Mt. Juliet, TN (an LCMS charity) added a hot lunch for the school children and staff. Dr. Jim Volk, Barbara's late husband and a pediatrician, saw the great need for basic medical care for the school children and established a medical clinic with a fulltime school nurse. Barbara and Jim made several trips to take medicine and supplies to Laotchikit. Vickie Fisher, a nurse, used her skills on several trips to treat sick children at various villages in medical clinics.

During a visit we noticed young orphaned children always hanging out around the church and school. So, a children's shelter behind the church was added as a safe place for children without relatives to care for them. That required house parents to look after the children. Now there is a boys' shelter and a girls' shelter. Sadly, this shelter is also used for girls whose families have safety concerns for the girls from male household members.

Once when Pastor Walta visited Mt. Pisgah, he gave a presentation on the Lutheran school in Laotchikit which educates children up to 6th grade. Michele Maloney asked Pastor Walta where students go to school after 6th grade. (This was an important question to Michele as she was in 5th grade at that time.) Pastor Walta told her there was no schooling for students after 6th grade

because the parents could not afford to pay tuition to send their children to middle and high school. That question from Michele started the scholarship program. It started with a few students who finished 6th grade and were willing to walk two hours one-way to school in Hinche. This was dangerous and time consuming for the children. The success rate was the best so Pastor Walta began to add more grades to the Lutheran school in Laotchikit. This no longer required the long walks to Hinche each day and the success rate of the students greatly improved.

The young people had no skills to earn a living, so Mikki Reinicker and Barbara Volk started a sewing school with three treadle sewing machines. Treadle machines are required because there is no electricity in Laotchikit. Now, there are eleven sewing machines used to make uniforms for the school children.

There was rich soil around Laotchikit but there were few crops so farming projects were started to give farmers the equipment and supplies they needed to grow food. Now with irrigation, tools and seeds, farmers are able to feed their families and produce enough for a cash crop to sell.

Haiti is known for deforestation so the school children were taught to plant trees and many trees are planted around the school and neighborhood, especially food producing trees like banana, citrus, and avocado.

Pastor Walta told us they really needed a seminary to teach and equip Lutheran church workers and teachers. It began very small. Pastor Phil McLain and Pastor Jon Christensen both went on mission trips and spent their entire time in a class room teaching adults about the Bible. A member of Mt. Pisgah received an inheritance from their grandfather who was a Lutheran college professor. To honor the memory of their grandfather, a Lutheran seminary for adult church workers was started. When social violence increased and it was unsafe for the professors or the adult students to travel to class in Laotchikit from Port-au-Prince, Pastor Walta installed a gas generator, solar panels, and big screen television in a classroom in Laotchikit. This equipment with internet access by cell phone allowed students to login to classes each Saturday. Now there is access to professors in the United States and Canada and access to classes for French and English-speaking students from around the world. As there is no tuition charged to the students, people called by God are allowed to attend Saturday Lutheran seminary classes which now includes over 100 students taking classes online and in person from all over Haiti, Brooklyn, NY, Canada, France, Rwanda, Senegal and the Republic of Congo.

As villages saw the growth and prosperity of Laotchikit, they wanted the same for their own village and there are multiple preaching stations, small congregations and eight Lutheran schools. Recently one of the seminarians brought seven churches from another denomination into the Lutheran faith. There are now more than 20 Lutheran churches and 10 preaching stations in the Central-Plateau.

Administration and Oversight

Because Haiti is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, we have very strong financial transparency and accountability procedures in place. This gives the donors confidence that their donation is used for the intended purpose it was given. Mt. Pisgah's policy is to operate in complete financial transparency.

Our Mission Committee supports every request following these steps:

1. A need is identified, information is reviewed, and a budget is established for the need.
2. The Mission Committee considers the need and decides if Mt. Pisgah will support the need if funding is available.
3. The money for the need is wired to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) synod.
4. Pastor Walta Clercius draws the money from the ELCH synod and uses the money for the specific purpose.
5. Pastor Walta sends us objective evidence that the money was used for the designed purpose the money was sent.
6. This evidence is shared with the Mission Committee.

Examples of objective evidence are payroll reports, pictures, receipts, weekly screen shots from the seminary classes, medical reports, etc.

Mt. Pisgah does not take any part of the designated gift. All the money, 100% of the gift, goes to the designated need for which the gift was given. We make every effort to use designated gifts for their intended purpose out of respect for the donor and because of the need. However, when a dedicated gift is received at Mt. Pisgah, we reserve the right to redirect the funds if there are unforeseen circumstances. With all the social insecurity in Haiti, this is a very real possibility. We will not send funds if we do not have every reason to believe the funds will be used for the intended purpose.

There is a great need for other congregations in the US to come along side villages in Haiti to help with Lutheran schools. A Lutheran school can be sponsored for as little as \$300 per month for ten months per year.

Seeing the church grow in such difficult social conditions is really like is watching a miracle happen before you. God has given us the incredible joy of watch the miracles develop over the last 12 years, especially in a country of such instability and violence. As people of Mt. Pisgah are called by God to help in various ways, we see the Spirit of the living God, at work, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. We thank God for each of you and the ways you support the mission field around the world!

Please reach out to a member of the Mission Board if you have any questions or ideas for Mission Support.

Sue Glossop

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 10:00 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.

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

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