ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH , HOLLAND, MN OCt. 2021–NEWSletter 10

**“Transgenderism”** Sometime over the next few months in Bible Class I would like to go over a short booklet “A Biblical Response to Transgenderism” by David Langewisch. In the beginning he gets us thinking about the subject. People have struggled with their sexual identity for much of human history. Even in Old Testament Israel there was a law in Deut. 22:5 which stated: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.” Truly Eccl. 1:9 has it right: “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

Today these issues that have troubled humanity for ages have again hit social media in a permission-giving culture that hasn’t stayed in the backrooms or is spoken of only in whispers. Society is struggling to have open conversations when ***many have rejected or are ignorant of the biblical worldview*** and what the Bible has to say about God’s gift of humanity and sexuality.

“The message of Christianity is one of a ***shared*** struggle with sin, shared by all. But the message of Christianity is also one of promise and victory in Jesus Christ, designed for all. Regardless of where people are—on society’s fringe or on Christianity’s moral and spiritual fringe—the heart of God is filled with compassion and longing to draw all people to himself.”

Many also are of the opinion that the Church is not a safe place to talk about issues of sexuality and gender identity. “Some falsely think the Bible and those who say they live by it are filled with nothing but judgment. The first step in a Christian, biblical response to transgenderism is changing that perception. Certainly, the Bible is filled with judgmental statements. ‘Thou shalt not’ does not leave room for ‘But what if I ***want*** to?’ Behind God’s statements of judgment and declarations of His Law are His love for His creation and His desire to set humanity on a good path, a redemptive path, a path that is described by Jesus as life to the full, as having life ‘abundantly’ (John 10:10).”

“When Jesus walked this earth, He had an incredible ability to balance judgment with love. He has remarkedly high standards. He had zero tolerance for sin in any form. However, He also associated with a crazy mix of people. And He was criticized for this: ‘Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ (Matthew 11:19). When a woman who clearly had guilt in the area of sexual sin came to anoint Jesus, one of the religious experts looked on with judgment: ‘If this man were a prophet, He could have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner’ (Luke 7:39). The implication is this—if we find out how bad someone’s sin is, we won’t associate with that person.”

“If the Church locks its doors to sinners, the inside is empty. If broken people have to repair themselves before they can receive any of God’s love, no one is loved by God. And this understanding is what makes the Church a safe place for those who may be dealing with sexual identity issues. God calls sinners who are trapped in their sin. He does not leave them there, but that’s where He starts….If there is any part of life where there are hard questions and challenging conversations, it is with gender-identity and sexual orientation issues. And if anyone needs a safe place to go, it is someone who struggles with these issues or who has a friend or family member who is struggling.”

“One mistake made in the conversation about gender confusion and transgenderism is thinking this is primarily about the question ‘With whom do I want to have sex?’ While this question is a part of the discussion, it is secondary. At its heart, this is an identity issue. Gender issues and sexual orientation are very little about biological urges and sex, and very much about where a person finds feelings of belonging and acceptance. ***Who am I? Who is like me?*** If you believe the words of the Bible, you know our identity is found in Christ. In Galatians 2:20, the apostle Paul says, ‘I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.’ This is very important! If it is ***I*** who lives, then ***I*** drive the identity discussion. If it is ***Christ*** who lives in me, then ***He*** drives the identity discussion.”

I’m looking forward to having this discussion with you.

Pastor Petrich

***Sunday Lessons and Hymns*** *[Guitar]*

**Sept. 26th** : Ps. 135:13,1-3,13-14; Numbers 11:4-6,10-14,24-29; James 5:13-20; **Mark 9:38-50**

**LSB** Pg. 219 Matins **HYMNS:** *“Listen! You Nations”;* #850 “God of Grace and God of Glory”*; #833 “Listen, Listen God Is Calling”;* #718 “Jesus Lead Thou On” *“We Come to Praise You”;* #922 “Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

**Sunday Oct. 3rd** Psalm 86:5-12; Ezek. 36:22-27; **I Pet. 1:18-22**; Mark 12:28-31

**LSB** Pg. 203 DS#4 **HYMNS:** #913 “O Holy Spirit, Enter In”; #795 “Voices Raised to You We Offer”; #704 “Renew Me, O Eternal Light”; “Serve the Lord with Gladness” DISTR: #706 Love In Christ Is Strong and Living”; #623 “Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray”; #740 “I Am Jesus Little Lamb”

**Sunday Oct. 10th:**Psalm 112:1,3-6; Amos 5:6-7,10-15; **Mark 10:17-22**

**LSB** Pg. 235 Morning Prayer **HYMNS:** #694 “Thee Will I love, My Strength”; #809 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”; #743 “Jesus, Priceless Treasure”; *#605 “Father Welcomes”;* #753 “All for Christ I Have Forsaken”; *#712 “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”;* #688 “’Come Follow Me,’ the Savior Spake”

**Sunday Oct. 17th**: Psalm 34:18,1-4,17; Ecclesiastes 5:10-20; **Hebrews 4:1-13**; Mark 10:23-31

**LSB** Pg. 151 DS#1 **HYMNS**: #645 “Built on the Rock”; #690 “Hope of the World”; #744 “Amazing Grace”; DISTR: #748 “I’m but a Stranger Here”; #770 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”; #918 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer”

**Sunday Oct. 24th** Psalm 130:1-2; 131; Jeremiah 31:7-9; Hebrews 7:23-28; **Mark 10:46-52**

**LSB** Pg. 260 Prayer and Preaching **HYMNS:** #979 “God Whose Almighty Word”; *“Thy Word”; “Are You Lost in the Dark”;* #841”O Son of God, in Galilee”; #551 “When to Our World the Savior Came”; #846 “Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old”

**Songs not in Hymnal:**

**Sept. 26th: “Listen! You Nations”**

REF: Listen! You nations of the world; listen to the Word of the Lord. Announce it from coast to coast; declare it to distant islands.

1. The Lord who scattered Israel will gather His people again; and He will keep watch over them as a shepherd watches his flock. REF:
2. With shouts of joy they will come, their faces radiantly happy, for the Lord is so gen’rous to them; He showers His people with gifts. REF
3. Young women will dance for joy, and men young and old will make merry like a garden refreshed by the rain, they will never be in want again. Break into shouts of great joy; Jacob is free again! Teach nations to sing the song: “The Lord has saved His people!” REF

**“We Come to Praise You”**

1. Heavenly Father, we come to praise You, And to say thank You here in our song, For all the gifts You give through Your kindness, Showing Your love, forgiving our wrong.
2. Jesus, our Savior, we love and follow, For all the blessings You died to share; Life and salvation we have forever, Trusting Your mercy, knowing Your care.
3. Comforting Spirit, move us to worship, Showing Christ’s love in all that we do. Help us to serve our brothers and sisters, Knowing the off’ring’s given to You.

**Oct. 24th: God Whose Almighty Word”**

1. God, whose almighty word Chaos and darkness heard And took their flight: Hear us, we humbly pray, And where the Gospel day Sheds not its glorious ray, Let there be light!
2. Lord, who once came to bring, On Your redeeming wing, Healing and sight, Health to the sick in mind, Sight to the inly blind: Oh, now to human-kind Let there be light!
3. Spirit of truth and love, Life-giving, holy dove, Speed forth your flight; Move on the water’s face, Bearing the lamp of grace, And in earth’s darkest place Let there be light!
4. Holy and blessed Three, Glorious Trinity, Wisdom, love, might! Boundless as ocean’s tide, Rolling in fullest pride, Through the earth, far and wide, Let there be light!

**“Thy Word”**

**Chorus: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.**

1. When I feel afraid, think I’ve lost my way, still You’re there right beside me, and nothing will I fear as long as You are near. Please be near me to the end. **Chorus**
2. Now I will not forget Your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering. Jesus, be my guide and hold me to Your side, and I will love You to the end. **Chorus**

**Are You Lost in the Dark”**

Are you lost in the dark? Do you need a little spark?

Do you need a little light to help you see?

Out of the darkness Jesus love is shining

Down in the hearts of you and me.

Chorus: He is the light that's shining bright,

He's the truth that set the captive free.

He is the light that gives us sight.

And reveals the Father's love to you and me.