



PEW NEWS
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 2023

Jerusalem - A Kingdom that Cannot be Shaken

The attack by Hamas terrorists on the country of Israel on the morning of October 7th has shaken people. The barbaric nature of the Hamas tactics should disturb all of us. Kidnapping civilians and beheading women and children is unjustifiable. The conditions among the two million people who live in the Gaza Strip and the "collateral damage" as a result of the aerial bombardment should disturb us. But what has shaken so many is to see this special part of the world embroiled in warfare once again. For many this war is a fulfillment of Bible passages like Matthew 24:6 where Jesus warns of "wars and rumors of wars" as a sign of the close of the age.

The author of Hebrews points to another group of people who were shaken by the events they witnessed - God's children as God came down on Mt. Sinai to give them the ten commandments. In Exodus 20 we read that the people "were afraid and trembled" and ultimately they ask Moses to serve as a mediator between them and God.

But now listen as the author of Hebrews compares that day to the day we are facing. "For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them." (Hebrews 12:18-19)

But the kingdom that we turn to and trust in is not an earthly kingdom or any city that we can visit or touch. The author of Hebrews continues, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Il those who believe that Jesus died for their sins have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus that washes away their sins so that they can gather with God's saints on earth and

the saints in heaven around God's throne. They are God's chosen people. That assembly of saints is the heavenly Jerusalem. There need not be any trembling or doubt because of the one who stands with us as our mediator. It is the same Jesus who died for our sins so that we can be declared forgiven and holy. So the author of Hebrews says, "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." (Hebrews 12:28) Pray that people everywhere would know the peace of having a kingdom that cannot be shaken - a heavenly Jerusalem.

Newsletter Survey

This newsletter serves as one way to share information with people who attend St. John's Lutheran Church. We also use the Sunday Bulletin, the church website, and weekly emails to disseminate information. Anyone who has information about events going on at the church is welcome to submit an article by emailing it to Ginny Dixon at ginnymaeforu@gmail.com.

If you value this newsletter please take a moment to complete this survey. We will use the response to this survey to determine if and how we keep publishing this newsletter. Completed surveys should be put in the wooden box in the back of the church.

1. How important is the newsletter in keeping you up-to-date?

Not Important Extremely Important
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What kind of content would you like to see us add to the newsletter?

3. How could the newsletter be improved?

4. How would you prefer to read the newsletter - electronically or print?

Bring a Friend Sunday - November 12th



While we encourage you to bring a friend to church every week we have a special opportunity for you on November 12th. We've set aside this Sunday as "Bring a Friend" Sunday. We're doing several things to welcome new people that day.

1. There will be welcome bags for every guest in church.
2. We will have a covered dish luncheon after the late service to provide an opportunity for extra fellowship. Social ministry will provide the main course. You're encouraged to bring your favorite salad or dessert.

Now I want to challenge each of you to bring a friend with you that doesn't normally

worship with us. Invite one of your neighbors. Invite a friend from work. Invite a friend from the gym. It's your choice but begin praying right now about who the Lord would like you to invite and that He would make their heart receptive to your invitation.

There are invitation cards available in the back of the church. On one side it has the church logo and an invitation to join us. On the other side it has information on worship services and how to contact us. We've printed them so that you can hand them out to people you meet as you travel around town.

God's Chosen People

God promises that He uses all things for the good of those who love Him so it shouldn't surprise us that God is using the war in the Middle East to get His people back in their Bibles. I hear lots of people saying that we need to pray for Israel which begs the question, "Who is Israel? Who are God's chosen people?"

The apostle Paul answers these questions in the book of Romans. In Romans 2:28-29 he says, "For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter." Paul says that we are God's chosen people, Israel, by faith and not by physical descent. Lest we misunderstand him he explains even further in Romans 9:6-8. "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring."

In John 1:11-13 we read, "[Jesus] came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

What does that mean for those who are of Jewish heritage? The apostle Paul says they have a special place in history. In Romans 9:4-5 he writes, "to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen." God chose to work through them in history to bring about His plan for the salvation of the world.

It is our privilege today, as God's chosen people, the people through whom God is at work today bringing about His plan of salvation, to share Jesus with everyone including those who of Jewish heritage so that they too can believe that Jesus died for their sins and receive eternal life. It is our privilege today, as God's chosen people, to petition God on behalf of all people including the people who live in Israel and Palestine!



Altar Flower Signup

The Altar Flower chart for the year 2024 has been put on the bulletin board with the hope we will continue to decorate our church with fresh flowers. Please sign up to place one or two vases in church during the service. Make checks payable to **Rochette's Florist** for the amount of \$20 per vase and place it in the offering plate. Designations of the flowers should be called in or mailed to the church office. The flowers are yours to take home after the service. Thank You

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty

The Lutheran Center for religious liberty is an arm of our LCMS which is in the pursuit of God-pleasing religious liberty and to help equip the saints of our church to live and speak boldly on matters of life, family, marriage, and our First Amendment freedoms.

In a recent newsletter they shared how The Respect for Marriage Act, passed and later signed into law may be used against our churches and school by jeopardizing our tax-exempt status. Many lawsuits have been filed against Christian schools and religious institutions for expecting employees to comply with the biblical guidelines for marriage.

U.S. courts have recently been telling Christian Schools that because they are tax-exempt, they are government supported, and they must therefore comply with government definitions on things such as human sexuality. This is not true, ever since American's founding, parochial schools have existed so that the government cannot coerce us. Our schools are tax-exempt, not for the purpose of getting a financial break from the government, but to be a moral voice that keeps our government in check.

Other examples of areas in which our government is trying to put harnesses on the rights of Christians are given monthly to keep us aware and letting us know how we may be affected in the future. Like the Supreme Court being asked by a lesser judge to strike down the ministerial exemption which ensures that houses of worship are free to run their internal affairs including selecting their own ministers without government interference.

Interested in learning more about LCRL, check them out at lcrifreedom.org

Blessings and Thanksgiving

For the Old Latin School (OLS) in Wittenberg, Germany serving as a home for approximately 30 Ukrainian refugees, who are delighted to listen to the Word of God in their own language. Word has spread about the Ukrainian Lutheran Congregation in

Wittenberg and more and more have come. They now have a big congregation; many services having standing room only. This is possible through God's blessing the gifts of His people (including St. John's) through the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Feeding Farmville

Feeding Farmville is getting ready to feed 1,000 people on Thanksgiving. If you or someone you know wants to sign up for a cooked meal on Thanksgiving Day you can register online at the website feedingfarmville.org, or call (434) 392-1875 or email secretary@stjohnsfarmville.org.

Many hands are needed to cook and deliver one thousand meals. Volunteers are needed. Register NOW to join the Team of Drivers who deliver meals, or you can help in the kitchen or registration. Please consider joining as a Community Partner or Individual as a Feeding Farmville Volunteer.

Go to the website feedingfarmville.org or contact Feeding Farmville at the same phone number and email above.

Thank you, Feeding Farmville Planning Committee

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;

Humpty Dumpty said AMEN!
GOD can put me together again.

