**** **Synodical Elections, Church Elections. God’s delight in us!**

*Acts 1:26 “and they cast lots and the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to their number.”*

Just looking at those two words in the title, I am sure does not spark a whole lot of love or desire to continue reading, does it? There are few things as acrimonious as elections to positions of power and authority. This acrimony often causes many people to just “check out” of the process altogether. After all when was the last time you heard someone say, “I can’t wait for the next voter’s assembly, we always have so much fun at them!”

This past week our Synod voted to elect a President to preside over us for the next three years. We were blessed to have thee capable men ready to serve. But they all had differing ideas of how to go about the work of the Synod in reaching the lost. In the end, we chose to re-elect President Matt Harrison.

 Freely being able to choose the person who will lead our Synod, or our church as Council members, is one of the gifts God gives to us through the Holy Spirit working in His Word. He lets our thoughts and ideas, shaped by His Word, be put into action. And then He lets us see how they turn out! And He lets us grow in reliance on Him through the whole matter.

As we debate our work together, and we let God’s Word be our guide and foundation we grow together in love for each other as we serve together. This is why it is so important that many different people from many different backgrounds and generations are allowed to serve in church ministry. God wants all of us working together to teach and train and to bring people to be baptized.

It is as we come together as brothers and sisters in Christ that the Lord delights in us. As we gather together in worship and service, in elections and board meetings, in fellowship meals and offerings, the Lord says he delights in us. He has joy for us, joy for you! To watch His children be given the opportunity to choose to serve and be together and see us willingly doing so out of love for God and to reach out is a delight to God, to use Biblical terms, a pleasing aroma.

So, while elections, and conventions, and voters’ meetings might not be the most enjoyable activities, we know that in our service God delights in what we do. And He promises to be with us in our decisions that we make in His Word and to lead us in the work that we do. He also promises to forgive us and restore us where we go wrong!

Pastor Johnson

PS. Our next joyful discussion of how to work together to bring God’s Word to people is the fourth week of July after our Divine Service. First, we will feast on the body and blood of Jesus and enjoy forgiveness of our sins and then we will gather as God’s family to plan our work for Him.

Thrivent Action Teams

Have you noticed church members wearing those super cool and comfortable t-shirts with the Thrivent Live Generously logo on them? Those t-shirts come from Thrivent Financial as part of their Action Team program.

If you have life insurance with Thrivent Financial, two Action Team Kits are available to you each calendar year. The kit comes with t-shirts and supplies as well as $250.00 so you can live generously in your community.

St. Paul’s has used Thrivent kits for brat frys, fellowship meals, leaf raking, the youth lock in, and more! If you have life insurance through Thrivent, we encourage you to take advantage of this generous offer and start up an event or donate your cards to current church programs.

Find out more here:

<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/>

Participate in the Youth Gathering From Afar

In just a few weeks, thousands of LCMS youth and adults from across the country and around the world will gather in Minneapolis for the 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering, July 11–15.

Organized by LCMS Youth Ministry and held every three years, the Gathering provides attendees with the opportunity to worship, serve, spend time in God’s Word and enjoy fellowship with other LCMS youth and adults.

If you can’t attend the Gathering, you can still follow along and participate through these online channels:

The Gathering website will host livestreams of mass events and worship services, as well as blog posts, photos and videos from day to day. Visit lcmsgathering.com to stay up to date and find more information about the schedule, events and speakers, as well as resources for adult leaders.

The Gathering app is available to download in the Apple Store and Google Play Store. Although the app is primarily for attendees, it can be used to learn more about Gathering speakers.

Youth Gathering social media will share exclusive content featuring highlights from the Gathering. Follow the Gathering on Facebook (@lcmsnyg), Instagram (@lcmsnyg), Twitter (@lcmsnyg) and Snapchat (@lcmsnyg) to get connected, and use the hashtag #NYG2019 to join the conversation. LCMS social media channels will also cover the event on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @TheLCMS.

Bible studies based on the theme of the Gathering, “Real. Present. God.”, are available on the Gathering website. Visit lcmsgathering.com/biblestudy to delve deeper into this theme along with the youth.

If you can’t attend or follow along in any of the above ways, you can still pray for the youth during the week, that they might be strengthened through worship, fellowship and God’s Word.

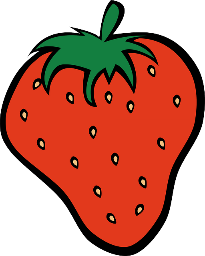
If you would like to make a gift to the Gathering offering, send a check to LCMS Youth Ministry, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295, with “Gathering offering” in the memo line. The Gathering offering will go to support the Gathering servant events as well as other youth and local ministries.

Record Updates

While working on our photo directory project, we noticed that there are some holes in our online records. We are missing, birthdays, baptism and confirmation dates, and anniversary dates for some of our members.

If you are missing any of this info, you will find a slip in your mailbox that asks you to talk to Pastor or Jenn Milner. They can let you know what we’re looking for.

Thanks!

Strawberry Supper Results

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who donated, helped cook, helped serve, helped clean up, and came and enjoyed the Strawberry Supper! We were able to serve 144 meals to church and community members. This is a wonderful evangelism event for us, and it went great! See you next year!

MEMORIAL FUND “WISH LIST”

Memorial funds are available for certain projects within the church. Do you want to add something to the wish list? Talk to LaVerne Slais. Our current list is below.

MISSIONS WORSHIP SUPPLIES MUSICAL HAND BELLS PASK BIBLE FUND

NEW BASEMENT FLOORING PROJECTORS (TV’s) (2)

BUILDING FUND LIBRARY

PADDED CHAIRS PARKING LOT

SUNDAY SCHOOL KITCHEN FUND

COLOR COPIER WITH FINISHER MISC—BASEMENT

COMPUTER

**Servents of Christ Conference**

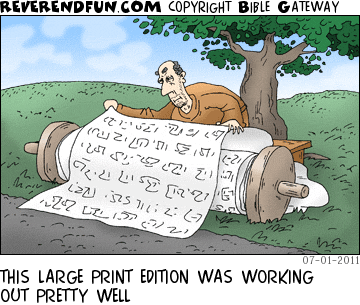


**When:** July 28-29, 2019 **Where:** Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon **Cost:** $25.00!

The Servants of Christ Conference will ground youth in the grace of their baptism, teach them about the doctrine of vocation, give them information about college and careers, and allow them to take part in breakaway sessions led by CUW professors and other guest speakers. These sessions are designed to strengthen their faith and help them to live as servants of Christ in our challenging world. The Servants of Christ Conference is for all students starting grades 9-12 this fall, and it will take place on July 28th and 29th on our Mequon campus. The cost, $25, covers **lodging and three meals.**

Adult chaperones are welcome to attend for the same cost as students, $25.

Please visit and encourage youth to visit this link for more information and for a tentative schedule and descriptions of the breakaway sessions for this year: [www.cuw.edu/ServantsofChristConference](http://www.cuw.edu/ServantsofChristConference)



**Lcms Stewardship article** July 2019

Whenever the topic of stewardship and giving comes up, the conversation inevitably turns to the question: “How much should I give?” Answers will vary because the motive behind such questions also vary.

Sometimes the motive behind asking this question is for self-justification. Even though, as Lutherans, we know we are not saved by our works but by grace through faith because of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement, the natural religion of fallen man is to earn God’s favor by what we do.

Take, for example, the response of our Lord to the rich young ruler who asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus first tells him to keep the commandments. The rich young ruler responds by indicating that all this he has kept from his youth. But Jesus tells him that he lacks one thing: He must sell all he has and give it to the poor and then follow Him.

This rich young ruler went away sad because he was quite wealthy and could not part with his possessions. Here we see that those who seek to justify themselves by their giving will hear a response that intensifies the duty that God places upon them. Indeed, they will hear a response that makes it impossible to win God’s favor by their works.

But to those who genuinely desire to know their duty as Christians in the arena of giving, we look to the Bible for our answer. We believe the Bible is the Word of God. And we know that the Word of God has been “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

So, we begin to answer the question, “What should I give?” with the question, “What does the Bible say about how much we should give and to whom?”

The Old Testament is explicit. The expectation is that the people of God would give a tithe – 10 percent – of the first fruits of their labor to support the full-time ministry of the Levites. This is what the Lord gave Moses to teach the people:

“You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

“And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire – oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves.

“And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.” (Deut. 14:22–29)

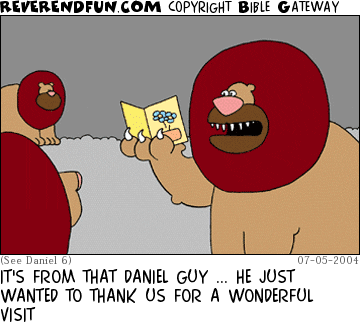
This principle of tithing is carried over into the New Testament, though not explicitly by calling it a tithe. St. Paul teaches the Church at Corinth the following:

We are to give to the church regularly (1 Cor. 16:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (1 Cor. 16:1–2; Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23). And all of this is because the “Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living by the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14), just as the Levites did.

This is our New Testament standard. Since Christ became poor for us in order to make us rich in Him – blessing us with the riches of heaven – so we have also been so blessed to follow the example of our Lord and Savior and give of ourselves and the work of our hands to bless others with the same.

If we have been lax in this, let us, like our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross and scorned its shame, likewise begin to work toward this goal of regular giving of a generous proportion of the first fruits of God’s giving to us.

And let us do so not begrudgingly, but for the joy set before us – with a spirit of eagerness, cheerfulness, and love – to share the blessings of God with those placed into our care.



**~~~~Vacation Bible School**

Are you ready for a miraculous mission unlike any other you’ve experienced at VBS? August 19-23 from 5:00-7:30 we will be blasting off on a mission with Jesus to save the world!

Vacation Bible School is open to preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary students. If you are interested in attending or volunteering, please contact Shelly Utecht. Or sign up at

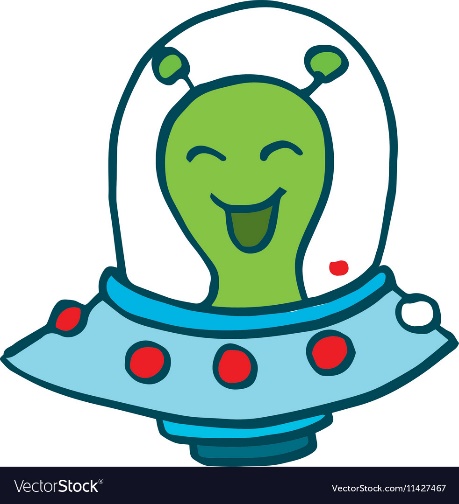
Vbsmate.com/StPaulLutheranAmherst

**Believers and Unbelievers:**

**Aliens from Different Planets**

Rev. Erik Rottmann, Trinity Lutheran, Cole Camp, MO

*What fellowship has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)*

 Since its publication in 1992, John Gray’s famous book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* has sold millions of copies. Part of this book’s appeal is its potential to help members of the opposite sex finally understand one another and truly communicate with one another. The underlying (and highly debatable) premise of the book is that men and women are so intrinsically different from one another that they often seem to be aliens from different planets.

Do men and women sometimes struggle to understand one another? Absolutely! But sometimes men also struggle to understand other men, women to understand other women, and Christians to understand their fellow Christians. All such struggles are the common result of sin’s deadly intrusion into the world (Romans 5:12).

Despite these workaday struggles, the Scriptures teach us to believe that the real communication gap is *not* actually between men and women (Genesis 1:27). The real

gap is between faith and unbelief. As St. Paul rhetorically asked in the verse above, “What fellowship has light with darkness?”

The answer to Paul’s question is “nothing.” There is no fellowship—no relationship and no unity—between “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6) and “the people dwelling in darkness . . . [and the] shadow of death” (Matthew 4:16). Believers and unbelievers are like aliens from different planets, even more distant than Mars from Venus.

As an example, consider how drastically believers and unbelievers differ in their views concerning the origin of the universe:

• The entire theory of evolution was conceived as an attempt to write the Lord our God completely out of the equation. It does not really matter to evolutionists how outlandish or implausible any given argument might sound. (For example, an act of spontaneous combustion accidently led to all the intricacies we observe in the world today.) All that really matters in the theory of evolution is the elimination of the Creator.

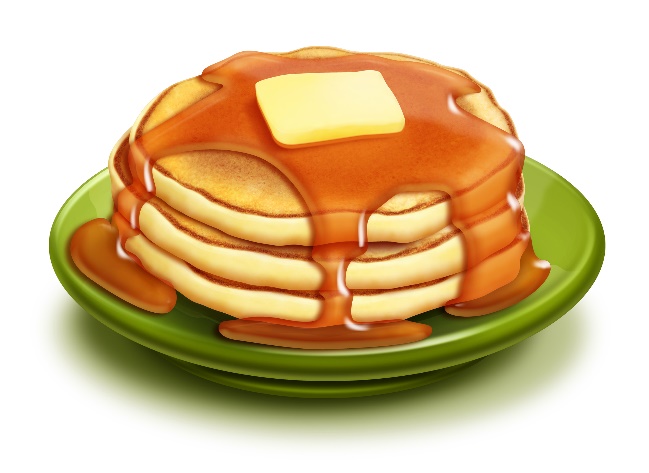
• At the polar opposite end of the spectrum, we who hold faith in God’s work of creation cannot live without any aspect of it. Our faith in God’s work of creation really has to do with our faith in the Holy Scriptures, which we believe to be the voice of the Holy Spirit. Our faith that God is the Creator also lays the cornerstone of our salvation, which is Christ Himself, crucified and resurrected from the dead. Creation is the conjoined twin of redemption: if you do not have the one, you cannot have the other. Without the creation, there is no salvation.

How shall we communicate the Scriptures to those who crassly reject the Scriptures—especially when we seem to be aliens from different planets? Such an “interplanetary obstacle,” so to speak, might tempt us not even to attempt speaking the faith to the world.

By no means! We Christians have the living, powerful, and active Word of God. This Word continues to exert miracle-producing power wherever it goes. Thus, we Christians have a distinct advantage over all other people in the world. When we confess the faith, we are not merely speaking ideas, as all other people speak. When we confess the faith, we are speaking the very voice and Word of God, which God has sworn, “shall not return to Me empty” (Isaiah 55:11).

Keep on speaking! Yes, we are living on different planets from those who reject the faith. Praise be to God! His living Word is powerful to travel even that far.

**Fellowship breakfast July 21st**

Join us before the service on July 21st for a delicious breakfast provided by the Elders. They are cooking up all sorts of fun menu ideas for the event, so come and enjoy the meal and the fellowship time with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

We will feast and then hopefully not all fall asleep during the sermon with a belly full of pancakes.

[](https://thedecoratedcookie.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/american-flag-smores-dip-image-2.jpg)**American flag s’mores dip**

### ****You will need:****

20 marshmallows  
toothpicks  
sprinkles in red, white, and blue  
scissors  
butter or Crisco  
9 x 9-inch square baking dish  
2 cups chocolate chips (semi-sweet, milk, or dark chocolate)  
graham crackers or pretzels for serving

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.

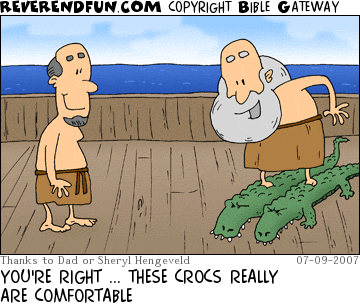
Skewer a marshmallow with a toothpick, submerge it totally in water quickly, dab on a paper towel, hold over a bowl and cover completely with blue sprinkles (both the top and bottom, too). Prepare five blue marshmallows.

Repeat with the white and red sprinkles, making eight white and seven red.

Let dry at least 20 minutes. Grease some kitchen scissors with butter or Crisco and cut each marshmallow in half, wiping the blades clean between colors.

Next, prepare the s’mores. Grease the baking dish with butter or Crisco. Pour the chocolate chips evenly in the dish. Top with the marshmallows, cut-side down in a flag pattern.

Bake in the oven for 7 to 9 minutes, just until the tops of the marshmallows start to brown. Serve with graham crackers and/or pretzels and enjoy!! Best served warm.



**The Shepherd’s Voice**

**July 2019**

# St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Missouri Synod

203 Grant Street, Amherst, WI 54406

Pastor Donald Johnson

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