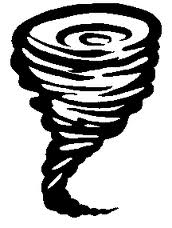
**** **God is our refuge and strength**

*Psalm 16 “Preserve me O’ God, for in You I take refuge because He is at my right hand I will not be shaken.”*

Where were you when the storm hit? The Portage County Fair was in full swing which meant a lot of people and animals were outside. I was in the office at church working on getting ready for Sunday morning. I had been meditating on Psalm 16 for the sermon text and had just posted portions of it to Facebook when suddenly my phone staring making this shrill sound of warning. I looked outside and saw the rain and intense wind. I leaped up, ran home, and cried out, “everybody to the basement right now!”

 I grew up in Indianapolis, right in Tornado Alley, so I spent many nights in the summer hunkered down in the basement. But here in Wisconsin we had never experienced this before. The storm caught us by surprise, and we were unprepared. As we went to the basement the power went out and we descended into darkness to find shelter. When we got downstairs, we realized we had no easily accessible flashlights or candles. We hunted around and finally found a few with dead batteries. More hunting found the batteries and we had a little bit of light.

When the storm had passed, we came up to find quite a bit of disarray, trees down, toys ripped apart, laundry strewn about and of course power lines all over the place. Yet I also saw something amazing, neighbors and friends coming out to see and check on each other. By God’s protection no one was injured. He is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble!

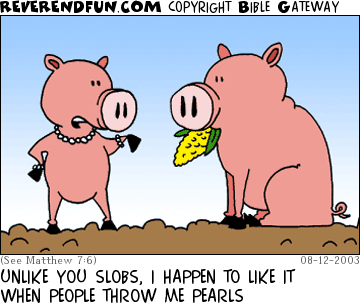
Over the next few days I realized a couple other really important lessons. With the power on we tend to spend a little too much time inside and apart from each other, now with the power out we came outside all day. The kids in the neighborhood were outside and they were playing with each other. We played games by sunlight, cards and board games. We read books outside to the kids and we put up a swing for them. By the second day we were having quite a bit of fun together. Mostly, what I will remember is how we all just dealt with it so well. No one was angry or upset about it. We all just thanked God for keeping us safe.

In the end we realized we may have allowed ourselves to get a little too dependent on modern conveniences for life and security. From our freezers to our phones, to our computers, we have developed our lives around electricity, but we learned in this what we really need is God and each other.

The most enduring memory I will have is the gathering of the body of believers that Sunday morning. No lights, no organ, no Power Point, no microphone, just us and God. I had to use 3x5 handwritten note cards for the sermon, but it was still every bit God’s Word. We used the hymnal again and we sang the historic liturgy from memory and God was present through His Word and promises. We received forgiveness and we all gathered and supported each other and left with joy.

God is at our right hand, He is ever present with us, in Word and Sacrament and no matter what happens we will not be shaken for He is with us.

Pastor Johnson



LCMS Convention passes resolutions on racism, care for immigrants

By Stacey Egger

TAMPA, Fla. — On Tuesday, July 23, at the 67th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), Floor Committee 11 on Church and Culture passed resolutions regarding racism and care for immigrant neighbors.

“These issues are in the headlines every day, and our people … are confused by what they hear,” said Floor Committee 11 Chairman Rev. Terry Forke, president of the LCMS Montana District. “They want to hear the clear Word of God.”

**Common humanity**

In accordance with resolutions passed in 10 prior Synod conventions since 1959, delegates unanimously passed Res. 11-04A, “To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities.”

Through its support of this resolution, the LCMS:

•“Publicly [condemns] the sin of racism in all its manifestations”;

•Asserts that this sin “has its roots in the sins of pride and arrogance,” that it is “contrary to the law of love,” and that it “denies the biblical truth that all humanity has a common origin in Adam”; and

•Encourages its members “to work toward racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and within society-at-large, praying that those who advocate racist ideologies and those who are deceived by them be brought to repentance, and that justice and healing come to those who have been wounded.”

**Harrison reminds delegates of ‘two kingdoms’**

LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison counseled the body as Res. 11-05A, “To Encourage Responsible Citizenship and Compassion Toward Neighbors Who Are Immigrants Among Us,” was brought to the convention floor.

“We live in two kingdoms,” said Harrison. “We don’t all agree on the specifics of immigration laws in this church. Those are not mandated by the Bible. … I may have views on the left-hand kingdom [civil authority] that are very strong in one way or another. In the right-hand kingdom, the kingdom of the Church, I have Jesus’ mandate of the Good Samaritan. My neighbor’s need is my vocation to mercy.”

Harrison urged the body to set aside their political views and consider their Christian vocation to serve their neighbor as they considered the resolution: “You may very well believe in building a wall in one kingdom, but in the other kingdom, my neighbor’s need is my call to mercy.”

**Compassion toward immigrant neighbors**

Res. 11-05A was met with a positive response from the delegates in discussion, who largely sought to strengthen the wording of the resolution, to help ensure freedom of conscience for the members of their churches to care for any and all of their neighbors in need.

An amendment to the resolution, which added a resolve that “members of the Synod give bold witness, in keeping with the Scriptures and Confessions, against inhumane treatment and attitudes towards immigrants, war refugees, and minorities,” was suggested and passed on the floor.

Among the other points of the resolution are:

•Encouragement of LCMS members to recognize “their calling to see the immigrant and the stranger as their neighbor”;

•Resolve “not to allow political divisions to become church divisions”; and

•Commendation of the 2012 LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations report Immigrants Among Us: A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues.

The amended resolution passed with 89.4 percent of the vote.

Forke felt that this resolution was timely and important because “there is so much confusion and concern. Our people want to love their neighbor, but they also want to be obedient to the laws of the land. So we hope that we gave some direction today.”

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.

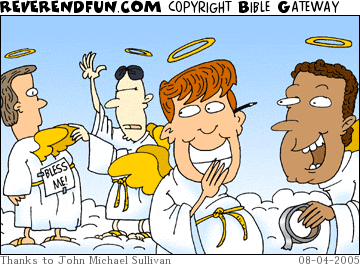
Thanks!

**Sunday School Kickoff!**

As summer comes to a close, we look forward to the joy of another year of Sunday School and Bible Study! Our first day of Sunday School will be Sunday, September 8th. We will celebrate the occasion with a special treat as we jump into our new curriculums.

We will once again have three classes: Preschool, Elementary students, and Middle School. High schoolers have the opportunity to join the adults upstairs for Bible Study or act as an assistant teacher in either the preschool or elementary classes.

Join us after the second service for a Sunday School kickoff picnic. Meat and soda will be provided. Bring a side or dessert to share.



**Lcms Stewardship article** August 2019

Have you ever noticed the subtle ceremony of receiving the offerings during the Divine Service? The offerings are collected in plates or baskets, and they are brought forward and given to the pastor or an assistant. The pastor turns toward the altar, and, as he slightly bows his head, the offerings are raised slightly to the Lord and placed on the altar or an adjacent table.

Why do we have this ceremony? And what does it teach us? For that is what ceremony does – it teaches, as the Augsburg Confession tells us what we need to know about Christ (AC XXIV, 1–3).

Originally, this ceremony included more than simply bringing forward what was collected in the offering plates. The elements for the Holy Communion – the bread and the wine – were brought forward with the offerings. The offerings and elements were lifted toward the Lord and placed upon the altar. The altar, now made a table, would be set for the Lord’s Supper.

Gifts brought to the altar come from the sweat of His people’s brow. They are the bread and wine, the fruits of His people’s labor in this fallen world. After six days of labor and toil, the people are to bring a generous proportion for the Lord’s work. Gifts set upon the altar are offered to the Lord for Him to take up and press into service for His gracious work.

For what is offered to the Lord from the sweat of His people’s brow – the bread of anxious toil – comes back to us as the bread of life. The bread comes down from heaven that whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup will receive life through the forgiveness of their sins.

This is not unlike what the Lord did for His people in the Old Testament:

“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.” (Deut. 14:22-26)

What a blessing! God provides for us in all things. He provides bread from the sweat of our brows. He receives this from us in the first-fruits offerings we give to Him in thanksgiving and praise, and He turns these into spiritual bread. He gives this heavenly bread – the bread of eternal life – back to us so we might have joy.

So, the next time you are in the Divine Service, watch this ceremony in wonder. The offerings we have given to Him, the Lord gives back to us in His supper so that we may rejoice in the salvation He won for us upon the cross.

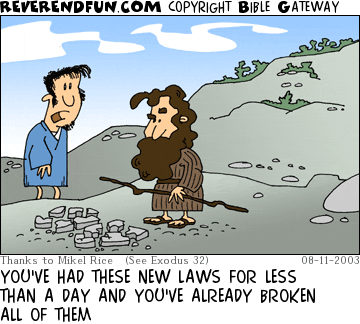
**VBS: Miraculous Mission!**

**~~~~**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. We will spend the week learning about God, singing songs, doing crafts, and playing games!

Invite your friends and family for this spectacular event. We are also looking for a volunteer to lead the games portion of the night. If you are interested in attending or volunteering, please contact Shelly Utecht. Or sign up at

Vbsmate.com/StPaulLutheranAmherst



**Voters’ Meeting**

Our July 28th Voter’s Meeting was cancelled after the big storms caused delays in planning. The rescheduled meeting will be held on Sunday August 18th.

If you have any items that you would like added to thee agenda, contact Jim Pieper as soon as possible!

**creation: Everything out of Nothing**

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

*All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:3)*

Here is an old chestnut: A scientist boasted to God that he and his team had developed a process for creating life. God asked the scientist to explain. “Well,” said the scientist, “we begin with a pile of dirt and . . .”

“Wait a minute!” interrupted God. “If you are going to create something, then you need to use your own materials, not Mine!”

When we humans think of ourselves as being creative, we fool ourselves at a very deep level. We create nothing. We merely rearrange preexisting things in new, perhaps completely novel ways. Vincent van Gogh did not create great works of art. He simply arranged canvas and paint in such a magnificent way as to please the eye and touch the heart. Light bulbs, skyscrapers, sandwiches, and children are not human creations, per se. They are human compilations—human constructions, arrangements, and formations. We humans have wonderful, God-given powers to theorize, conceptualize, design, mine, construct, manufacture, and arrange, for example. We do not have the power to create. Creation means that something was produced out of nothing. (The ancient theologians and fellow Christians used the phrase creatio ex nihilo, creation out of nothing, to describe our faith.)

The Greek philosophers opposed this idea as foolish and unreasonable, that creation indicates something coming from nothing. Parmenides and others posited exactly the opposite, insisting that nothing comes from nothing and everything comes from something. But the Greek philosophers could only see as far as the ends of their noses, so to speak. The philosophers refused the words and promises of God (Romans 1:20; 10:18; Psalm 19:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).

Like the Greek philosophers, those today who embrace and hold fast to the godless theory of evolution also refuse the words and promises of God. “The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18). For the evolutionist, matter must be eternal. If matter is not eternal, then someone must have created it. That possibility defies the fundamental premise of evolutionary theory, which was developed for the sole purpose of writing the Lord our God out of the equation.

The Holy Scriptures speak in careful defiance of this false, pagan idea that nothing comes from nothing and everything comes from something. The triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, must be the fountain and source of all things because there is no life and no existence apart from the triune God. This is why it is written,

• “ God . . . gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Romans 4:17).

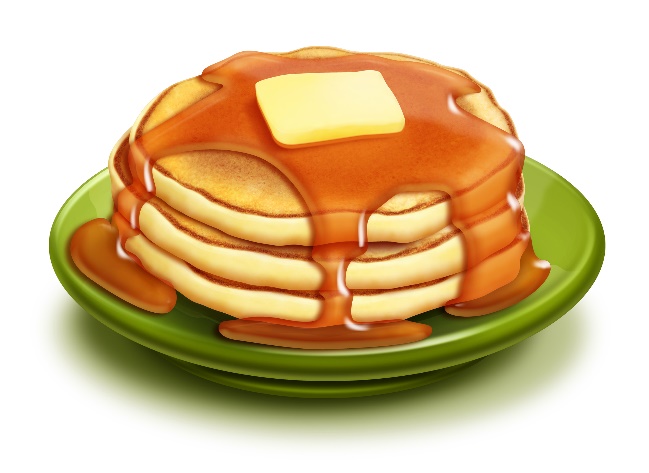
• “ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3).

• “ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

• “ By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host” (Psalm 33:6).

These passages are something more than words on a page; something more than essential elements of our confession of faith. These words form the foundation of our salvation in Christ. “All things were made through Him [Christ], and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). That which He made, He has also cleansed and redeemed. “In Him we live and move and have our being,” as even some of the Greek poets said (Acts 17:28).

**Fellowship breakfast Rescheduled!**

Look for information in the coming weeks about rescheduling our Fellowship Breakfast! The weather had some different plans for us, but now we have even more reason to gather together.

Watch the announcements for a new date!

**Zucchini Boats**

**TOTAL TIME:** Prep: 35 min. Bake: 25 min.

**YIELD:** 4 servings.

## Ingredients

* 2 medium zucchini (about 8 inches)
* 3/4 pound ground beef
* 1 small onion, chopped
* 1/2 cup chopped fresh mushrooms
* 1/2 cup chopped sweet red pepper
* 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
* 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
* 2 tablespoons ketchup
* Salt and pepper to taste

## Directions

* **1.** Trim the ends off zucchini. Cut zucchini in half lengthwise; scoop out pulp, leaving 1/2-in. shells. Finely chop pulp.
* **2.** In a skillet, cook beef, zucchini pulp, onion, mushrooms and peppers over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Remove from the heat. Add 1/2 cup cheese, ketchup, salt and pepper; mix well. Spoon into the zucchini shells. Place in a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.
* **3.** Bake, uncovered, at 350° until zucchini is tender, 25-30 minutes.

**The Shepherd’s Voice**

**August 2019**

# St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Missouri Synod

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