



**THE
CRESTVIEW LUTHERAN
NEWSLETTER**

JANUARY 2023

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“And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

“Now, Lord, You are letting Your bond-servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;

For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

Which You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples:

A light for revelation for the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel.” Luke 2:25-32

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Recently, I received a request from a college student to help her with a presentation for a class she is taking. Her topic is on sermons. She included the following questions:

What makes a weak sermon, and what can be done to correct it?

What are the most important aspects of a sermon?

Do you think a sermon could be harmful?

If a member of your congregation calls you out on your not preaching Law and Gospel, how would you respond?

To these I responded with the following and thought you might benefit from being reminded.

This is a great question and certainly one that speaks as much to our world today as it did at the time of the Reformation.

The sainted Dr. Martin Luther observed in his preface to the Small Catechism:

“The deplorable, wretched deprivation that I recently encountered while I was a visitor¹ has constrained

and compelled me to prepare this Catechism, or Christian instruction², in such a brief, plain, and simple version. Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately, many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet suppos-

edly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the Holy Sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! ³As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the Gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of mis-

using all their freedom.”⁴

edly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the Holy Sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! ³As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the Gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of mis-

using all their freedom.”⁴

In short, many, if not most, pastors of Luther’s day were incompetent preachers and teachers who were ignorant of the Word of God, and therefore, they could not communicate the Gospel effectively to the people they served. Sadly, that condition is just as prevalent today. One only needs to listen to today’s

radio and TV preachers, and sadly, many Lutheran preachers. Couple that with the teaching of false doctrine, or the plain doctrinal indifference of those who hear their sermons, and we have a recipe for spiritual disaster of major proportions.

In addition, we all too often judge a sermon's merits on the personality of the pastor, his delivery (e.g. Does Pastor's preaching bore me to tears or put me to sleep? Is his delivery monotone, etc.?), or is it that we just do not like the things Pastor has to say (e.g. Is what he has to say relevant to me and my condition? Am I uncomfortable with his bluntness? Pastor is always inferring that I am a sinner and as bad as everyone else, etc..)?

While delivery style can make a sermon easier to listen to, the delivery style is not what is truly important and therefore, not what one should concentrate on, rather what is important is the content of the sermon; what is the pastor communicating to us. Remember: Words mean something!

What do I mean? Well, frankly, many sermons preached today are not Christ centered messages. Many pastors have replaced the message

of the Cross with a focus on the Christian life, or social, or other cultural issues, which are not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Oftentimes, the Word of God is consciously rejected in an attempt to "grow" the church by not offending anyone with the bare truth of God's Word.

Rev. Todd Wilkins, host of the Issues, Etc. radio program, has developed a good test to determine if the sermon that a pastor preaches is a Christ centered, Cross focused sermon. His simple diagnostic focuses on what the pastor says, not the pastor's delivery style, nor on a pastor's ability to effectively communicate, entertain, or be culturally relevant to his listeners, but instead, on the content of what is being communicated to those who hear the sermon. This set of questions is a tool that you can use whenever and wherever you are listening to a sermon. **REMEMBER**—Content is everything in a sermon!

How often is Jesus mentioned in the sermon?

Not a mentioning of a generic god.

Not a euphemism for God

If Jesus is mentioned, is He the subject of the verbs?



What are those verbs?

Examples might be:

Living... for you

Suffering... for you

Dying... for you

Forgiving... you

First, if Jesus is not mentioned at all in the sermon, even in His various names or titles (Christ, Son of God, etc.), then you know that this is not a Christ centered sermon and therefore, not a Christian sermon.

Second, when Jesus is mentioned, is He the subject of the verbs? In every sentence, there is a subject and a verb. If Jesus isn't the subject, then who or what is?

If, when Jesus Name is mentioned, He isn't the subject of the verbs, then this cannot be a Christ centered sermon. When someone other than Christ is the subject of the sentence, then Christ cannot be the focus of the sermon. In addition, just because Christ is mentioned, doesn't make the sermon a Christian sermon, especially if the Gospel is neither present nor proclaimed.

Thirdly, look at the verbs associated with Jesus in the sermon. Are the verbs associated with Jesus passive or active? Is Jesus doing the action or is He being acted upon? If Jesus isn't the One doing the acting, then who or what is? If the pastor is placing the individual listener as the one doing the action, then this sermon is not a Gospel sermon. For example, "Jesus is waiting for you to give your life to Him"

"A sermon which presents a true Biblical solution always has Jesus at the center and will always tell you what He has done for you on the Cross. Therefore, a good sermon will always be Christ centered and Cross focused."

makes Jesus the passive player and the individual listener the one doing the acting. If the pastor says "Jesus has saved you and gives you life" he presents Jesus as the One doing the action and the listener as the one receiving the action. This is very important since the Gospel is not about what we do for Christ, but what

Christ has already done for us.

At the end of the sermon, ask yourself these two questions: "What is our problem being identified by the pastor in his sermon?" and "What is the solution for our problem?" Is the problem that we are sinful by nature or that we simply make mistakes, missteps, or act inappropriately? How the pastor defines the problem is critical to

how Christ is part of the solution. Thus, his definition of the problem also defines the roll of Christ in the solution. If the problem is anything less than our sinful nature and our inability to seek or please God on our own, or our inability to do good of any kind on our own, then the problem defined in the sermon is not the problem defined in Holy Scripture.

And finally, what is the solution to the problem that the pastor presents in the sermon? If the solution presented is to “Give your heart to Jesus” or to “Change your attitude,” if it is at all implied that the listener is the source for the solution of the problem, then the pastor has placed the focus of the sermon and the solution of the problem on the individual listener and not on Jesus. A sermon which presents a true Biblical solution always has Jesus at the center and will always tell you what He has done for you on the Cross. Therefore, a good sermon will always be Christ centered and Cross focused.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Pastor Parent

¹Luther made official visitations of congregations in electoral Saxony and Meissen from 22 October 1528 through 9 January 1529. He described his experiences in a letter to Nicholas von Amsdorf dated 11 November 1528 (WABr 4:597; LW 49:213–14).

²See LC, “Short Preface,” 1–2.

³In Luther’s day the word “catechism” denoted these three parts, cited here in an order sometimes found in late-medieval manuals.

⁴Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord : The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (347). Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Sunday’s Readings

(Lectionary)

| Date | Old Testament | Epistle | Gospel |
|---------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Jan. 1 | Num. 6:22-27 | Gal. 3:23-29 | Luke 2:21 |
| Jan. 8 | 1 Kings 8:6-13 | Rom. 12:1-5 | Luke 2:41-52 |
| Jan. 15 | Ex. 33:12-23 | Rom. 12:6-16 | John 2:1-11 |
| Jan. 22 | 2 Kings 5:1-15a | Rom. 12:16-21 | Matt. 8:1-13 |
| Jan. 29 | Ex 34:29-35 | 2 Pet. 1:16-21 | Matt. 17:1-9 |
| Feb. 5 | Ex. 17:1-7 | 1 Cor. 9:24-10:5 | Matt. 20:1-16 |

FROM THE PRESIDENT

“That’s not fair!” How many times have we heard that from our children, and lately, from some vocal adults in America? We are raised as children to embrace a sense of innate “fairness”, by standards that we are taught either by our parents at home, by our teachers at school, and/or through our churches.

When there is even the smallest amount of perceived infringement upon that standard, whatever it may be, then the war cry erupts immediately...“That’s not fair!” But there is a problem here...in order for something to be fair, two things are necessary: 1) a valid standard and 2) a judge to decide what’s fair and what isn’t.

What standards are in use in this world? Can you even identify them? Do they depend on what part of the country you live in? Are they stable or are they “flexible” depending on which way the wind is blowing, or which political party is in power at the time? Think about the so-called same-sex “marriage”, that would’ve been deemed an abomination of the holy estate of matrimony just

30 years ago in this country. And yet now, even the Congress of the United States has passed a mis-labeled law called “Respect for Marriage Act”, which is just legal protection for so-called same-sex “marriage”. Why do the “standards” for fairness keep changing, especially for the worse? Obviously, it’s due to sin. Practically speaking though, how can you be



loyal to a worldly standard when the object of your loyalty wavers and changes? This is a house built upon shifting sands. And then there is the issue of the judge.

Who gets to make the decision on what’s fair? The worldly answer seems to be: every individual. That’s a lot of judges! You can see this in common phrases like, “Just Do It”, “Do It If It Feels Good”, etc. You can see the issue here...what seems fair to me may not be fair to you. Houston, we have a problem!

Years ago, an atheist co-worker of mine once asserted that, “God is not fair!” (he didn’t see the irony in judging Someone whom he believed did not exist, but I digress).

He reasoned that it was not fair that God would forgive someone who lived an entirely wicked life, but then confessed his sin and repented at his last hour on Earth while on his death bed. That's not reasonable (thanks be to God)! I suppose he was right in a sense...God is not fair in the way many of us think about fairness, but He is just! Our Lord is a righteous Judge, using an immovable standard, His Law. And even He Himself is changeless; He is the same today as He was yesterday and will be tomorrow. On Him we can rely and in Whom we can put our full trust. We can stop thinking about what's fair and live as Christians whose bonds to sin were pulverized by Christ through His all-atoning life, bloody death on the cross, and resurrection. We are free to go beyond what seems fair to us and abundantly love and serve our neighbor, even the ones who hate us for not being "fair".

See you Sunday!

Alex

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Deaconess Bien has entrusted me to lead the Women's Book Club which will begin in January and will go through May. The Book Club will meet on the third Thursday of each month from 11:30-12:30 (after the Women's Bible Study) and will be repeated on the same day from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at my house (126 Creve Core Drive). In our last session of the book club, we all very much enjoyed studying Pastor Will Weedon's book *Thanks, Praise, Serve, and Obey: Recovering the Joys of Piety*, but this time we will be studying the Bible as it appears in secular literature. We will examine several poems, short stories, and one novel. All selections will be provided to attendees at no charge. I hope you will join me to unearth nuggets of God's Word that infuse some pieces of secular literature. I promise - no pop quizzes, no tests, no essays!

Women's Book Club dates to note in your calendar: January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, and May 18.

Blessings, Jennifer Currid

FROM THE LWML

Serve the Lord with Gladness! Psalm 100:2

December mites totaled \$13.66. Mites for 2022 totaled \$205.19. Mite Box Sunday is always the first Sunday of the month and mites are sent to the LWML Gulf States District to pay for District and National mission grants. The mite collection box will remain in the sanctuary so those who either miss attending the first Sunday or forget to bring it can drop it off any Sunday.

In December Linda replaced Lydia Landes as Emerald Coast Zone LWML President. Pastor Landes, who was the Zone Pastoral Counselor, accepted a call to St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Middleburg, FL near Jacksonville. This leaves our Zone without a Pastoral Counselor and Vice-President.

Thanks to all who purchased a poinsettia to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas.

We will start having LWML meetings beginning the first Saturday in February.

LWML Winter Quarterly is available in the rack across from the mailboxes.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

OSELCO LWML Meeting: Saturday, February 4, 2023, 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall

LWML Emerald Coast Zone Christian Growth Workshop, Spring 2023, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Pensacola

LWML National Convention, June 22-25, 2023, Milwaukee, WI

LWML Gulf States District Convention, April 26-27, 2024, Prattville, AL

-Linda Urda

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED AT OSELCO

Serve on a Board - See Alex Franco, Pres.

Sign up for Flowers—See sign up list in the Parish Hall

Sign up for Refreshments—See sign up list in Parish Hall

Serve on the Altar Guild—See Dcs. Heather Bien

Ongoing Project on Campus—See Brian Hull, Trustee

Soup Kitchen—See Becky Williams, Director

Serve as an Usher—See Julie Blaylock

Sunday School—9:00 a.m. Sunday, Parish Hall

Coffee with Pastor and Women's Study—10:00 a.m. Thursday

Men's Group

January 17

7:00pm

Pastor Parent's house

All men of the church are invited for a great time of study and fellowship.

6481 Wallanee Way

Laurel Hill

COFFEE WITH PASTOR



Coffee with Pastor

Thursday mornings

begins with

Matins at 9:00 a.m.

followed by time with Pastor to get to know him and for him to get to know his flock!

Youth Field Trip



Saturday, Jan. 14

10:00 a.m.

Tickets for the youth of OSELG will be provided.

Congregation members are welcome to

Birthdays:

Frank Sedmera 1/24

Evelynn Schmoltdt 1/4

Alan Widener 1/4

Steve Kamradt 1/10

Trish Hull 1/16

Brandy Arbour 1/18

Hannah-Grace Ballard 1/20

Alex Franco 1/22

Sean Widener 1/22

Glen Philogene 1/24

Save the Date

LWML Meeting

Saturday, Feb. 4 @ 10 am

Fellowship Hall

Women's Book Club

Thursday, January 19

11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

See Jennifer Currid for details



Women's Bible Study

Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

Study of

Psalms

Come join us for a good time of learning and fellowship!

Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church



Council Meeting Agenda

December 13, 2022



President – Alex Franco

Vice-President- Brad Bien

1. Opening Prayer – 6:32 p.m. by Pastor Parent
2. Attendance: Pastor Parent, Alex France, Brad Bien, Heather Bien, Brian Hull, Trish Hull, Jeannie Harrison, Julie Blaylock, Linda Urda, Jennifer Currid, Alan Widener, Becky Williams.
3. Approve previous council minutes. – The October and November Council minutes were approved at last voters' meeting.
4. Reports:
 - a. Pastor's Report (Fr Parent)- Conducted a baptism for Mahlon and Deb's grandchild after church on Dec. 11. Sunday morning Bible study has 8 more chapters in Matthew to cover. The next Bible studies will be on liturgy followed by Christian heresies. Pastor has been in touch with the Sparks family to check on their needs at the passing of Jaime's mother.
 - b. Deaconess Report (Dcs Bien)- See attached. Additional comments- Heather asks that Nov. council minutes be posted on the board in the Parish Hall as they did not appear in the Dec. newsletter. She is also organizing a Care Group and will ask after church Sunday if anyone would like to serve in this group that will take meals, or whatever is needed to congregation members after a death in the family or sickness.
 - c. Treasurer (Brian)- See attached. Additional comments- A motion was made asking that Brian contact a local accounting firm to prepare and to file the church's taxes and other government documents. The motion was seconded by Linda Urda and passed by a majority vote. The cost of this service will be \$1,200, but not to exceed \$1,400 a year.
 - d. Financial Report (Jeannie)- See attached.
 - e. Board of Security (Julie) – The push bar doors in the Parish Hall need to be tugged after locking to assure that they are securely locked. The last person on campus needs to check all doors on campus to assure they are all locked.
 - f. LWML (Linda)- See attached. Linda has asked to use the Parish Hall the first Saturday of each month from 10-12 for an Our Savior Church LWML meeting. As an aside, Julie volunteered to keep a calendar recording when the church's facilities have been reserved.

g. Board of Christian Life (Jennifer)- The Women's Book Club will resume on the third Thursday of each month (Jan.-May) from 11:30-12:30 after Women's Bible Study and on the same day at 6:00 p.m. at Jennifer Currid's house (126 Creve Core Drive).

h. Board of Education/ Youth (Gervase) – See attached.

i. Board of Elders (Alan)- No report.

j. Board of Trustees (Brian)- Work Days are complete for 2022. They will resume in 2023 on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month.

k. Board of Social Ministry (Becky) – Thank you to all who brought toys for the Crestview Police toy drive. The Grace Café is serving from 40-80 meals each week. Becky needs one more volunteer to cook once a month, two volunteers would be ideal. Becky will obtain the names and addresses of those people who are receiving food boxes that are distributed each Monday after the food truck delivery.

l. Board of Evangelism (Alex)- Five countries have viewed our church website, but only Canada and Mexico are probably valid inquiries.

5. Unfinished Business: None

6. New Business:

a. Inputs to Annual Report to The Congregation- Council members will sign the annual report on Sunday, Dec. 18.

b. Nomination of Synodical Officers (LCMS president, LCMS 1st vice president, So. District vice president)- This topic will be before the voters at the next Voters' meeting on February 19th.

c. Briefing Board Reports at Voters' Assembly Meetings- Council members may choose to provide a report to the voters or not; however, all council members need to be present to answer questions.

d. Jennifer Currid will be assisting the council secretary Trish Hull with the taking of notes and the disseminating of them.

7. Closing prayer- The Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Parent. Meeting adjourned at 7:42.

Jennifer Currid

**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN
EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

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We are on the Web!

[Www.Oselc.net](http://www.Oselc.net)



Sunday mornings:

8:00-8:45—Private Confession

9:00 Sunday School

10:00 Divine Service