

Good News of Peace

August 2017 A.D.

A Caring Family ✚ Reaching Out ✚ Sharing Christ's Love ✚ Teaching God's Word!

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

This month I have decided to avoid addressing topics like worship music preferences and surveys, and church signs, and budgeted funds and pledge drives, and whether or not our congregation might be showing some signs of sickness and decline of which we should be aware. In doing so, I don't mean to suggest that those kinds of discussions aren't worthwhile. But sometimes it's also beneficial to pause and take a step back and have the opportunity to be reminded about what is most important. Summer, I think, lends itself to that kind of reflection.

Summer is way too short for my liking, but I do enjoy it while it lasts. I appreciate the fact that there are fewer evening meetings here at the church and that there is a little bit less activity for the time being. I appreciate the fact that I am able to be home a little bit more and to spend a little bit more time with Julie and the kids. I enjoy having opportunities to work in the yard and taking evening walks with Julie by the lake. I enjoy sitting at Lakeside Park on Thursday evenings and listening to Isaac and Emmalyn play with the City Band. (In fact, I'm getting ready to head out for this year's last Thursday evening concert in just a few minutes.) I appreciate the fact that summer provides a little bit more time to catch my breath and to think ahead further than the activities of the coming week or weekend. And that it gives me a little bit more time to be a person and not just a pastor.

Sometimes I worry, in all of my busyness as a pastor, that I'm not doing a very good job of remembering what is most important in my life. Sometimes I also worry that I'm not doing a very good job of listening to Jesus and letting Him lead. Too often, I fear, I am guilty of too much thinking, too much planning, too much working, too much worrying, and not enough getting out of His way.

Sometimes I worry, in all of our congregational discussions and activities, that as a congregation we too easily lose sight of what is most important in our life together. Sometimes I also worry that we don't always do a very good job of listening to Jesus and letting Him lead. Too often, I fear, we are guilty of too much talking, too much doing, too much arguing, and not enough getting out of His way.

Too often, I worry, our discussions and activities wind up revolving around ourselves – even when we have the best of intentions. Not often enough, I fear, our discussions and activities truly revolve around Jesus and what He would have us be doing in our community.

Jesus, I think, would always have us be less-focused upon ourselves and more-focused upon Him and serving those around us in His name. Sometimes having some time to reflect provides an opportunity to be reminded that too often we miss that focus.

This summer's **Vacation Bible School** at the end of June serves as a good example, I think. It came and went quickly, as always. Maybe it was a little bit less visible this year because it didn't take place here at the church. All the same, what a wonderful opportunity it provided to partner together with other Lutheran

Christians in our community in order to serve the children and families of our community and to share the message of Jesus with them. It wasn't without its challenges, of course, but for those three days issues like who was responsible for what, or who was going to receive the credit for what, didn't really matter. Only one thing mattered: Jesus. We did less talking and deciding and competing and more serving and working together in His name.

Our fifth **Back-to-School Night** on Monday, August 21, serves as another example. (See elsewhere in this newsletter for more details.) What a wonderful opportunity it provides each year to love and to serve the children and families of our community in Jesus' name, without any strings attached, and to partner with a number of community organizations in the process. I look forward to this event each year because it gives us the chance to talk less about what we could do or might do and instead to give and to serve more.

As I reflect this summer on many of the things we have been talking about as a congregation in recent months, I find myself wondering: What would happen to all of our congregational discussions and activities if we made a habit of talking less and loving and giving and serving more? What would happen if we made a habit of listening more closely to Jesus and letting Him lead? What would happen if everything we did revolved, not around ourselves and our own preferences, but around Jesus and sharing Jesus with the people around us in word and deed?

Serving Him With You,

Pastor Derek Riddle

Nautical Festival Booth

A reminder that a portion of the proceeds from this year's booth at the Nautical Festival will be going towards the Michigan District's Here We Stand Campaign. The campaign's \$10 million goal has a four-fold focus: Professional Church Worker Scholarships (Here We Send), Innovative Missional Ministry (Here We Care), Michigan District Endowment (Here We Imagine), and International Ministry (Here We Share). As a congregation we have pledged to contribute \$10,000 over the next five years to the campaign, or \$2000/year. A portion of this year's booth proceeds will help us to meet this year's commitment.

This "Here We Stand" emphasis will be highlighted by a special banner at the booth that reads: "Peace Lutheran Church – Celebrating 500 Years of the Lutheran Reformation – Here we stand ... for you – 1517-2017."



Back to School Night

This year's event will be held on Monday, August 21. This has proven to be a successful outreach each of the past four years, and it has grown each year. Members of the congregation, it is not too soon to start collecting school supplies as they become available. Please see the green half-page sheet in the narthex for a list of what we will be collecting this year. Your generosity has helped this event to be more successful each year so far. Last year we were able to give away 125 bags of supplies; our goal this year is to be able to give away 150 bags. Monetary donations are also welcome and will be used to fill in where we are most lacking donations. Questions? See Lisa Coolman or Gail Boughner, who are co-coordinating this year's event. Please also watch the News & Notes in the coming weeks for additional details.

"Joining Jesus" Stories

Please continue to consider sharing your "everyday mission" stories with the rest of the congregation. Do you have an encounter or a conversation with someone you'd like to share? Do you have a neighbor for whom you have been starting to pray intentionally? Are you planning to host a party for your neighbors? Share your stories anytime with Pastor by sending him an E-mail or by writing something about them and dropping them off in the church office. Submissions will be posted on Pastor's office door in the coming months.

Neighborhood Parties

We recently applied for and received a Thrivent Action Team Grant in the amount of \$250 in order to assist and encourage members who might be interested in hosting a gathering of some type for their neighbors this summer. Doing so is one point of emphasis in Pastor Greg Finke's book, *Joining Jesus on His Mission*. If you are interested in some suggestions for how to go about hosting such a gathering, see Chapters 17 ("The Missional Party") and 18 ("What Will Your Story Be?") in the book (a couple of extra copies are available to borrow in the narthex). If you are interested in requesting some start-up funds for this purpose, please see Pastor or Julie any time.

Board of Elders

We welcome Jesse Fenstermaker as a member of Peace. Jesse was baptized into membership on July 16. Welcome, Jesse, and may God bless you. At the last Elders meeting the 'Hymn for the Nation' was discussed and will be sung on non-Communion Sundays. The "Contemporary" survey will be on the agenda for our August meeting.

A 'little food for thought'.....in your life experiences, what has God taught you? Have you experienced His love? How has God's love shaped your life? As we watch the events that are taking place in our world today we see the falling away from church and God. We need to stay tuned to God, knowing that we are not alone, for God is always with us wherever we go or whatever we are going through.

We need to welcome God into our heart and soul and make His Word a part of our life everyday. As we receive His Word we welcome Him into our lives, and we also show others the love that God has shown us. Ask God to keep you in His Word daily. Thanks be to God!

The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at www.lutheranhour.org. Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at www.lhm.org/apps/.

August 6

"On Thee the High and Lowly" Guest Speaker: Dr. Dale A. Meyer
It's "Archives August" and we present a classic message from former Speaker, Dr. Dale Meyer.
(Exodus 20:10)

August 13

"Looking for a Good Speaker" Guest Speaker: Dr. Dale A. Meyer
"Archives August"-What do the words "Our Father" teach us about our relationship with God and with each other?
(Matthew 6:9)

August 20

"God's Dog" Speaker Emeritus of TL: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus
Was Jesus being politically incorrect--or worse--when He compared a Canaanite woman to a canine?
(Matthew 15:21-28)

August 27

"Absolutely Nothing" Speaker Emeritus of TLH: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus
Pastor Ken Klaus explains how something that is "absolutely nothing" can be a very good thing.
(1 Corinthians 15:14-19)

Stewardship Corner

Winston Churchill reportedly said that "we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." According to Churchill then, our lives are defined less by what we have gotten, and more by what we give away. Our Lord's life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God's Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserve because of sin. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. And so it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got for Himself us, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace. As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the grip which the worries of this world and making a living has on us. When we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives—our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking the question—How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?—to asking the question—what have they done for me lately? We become more selfish instead of selfless. But when we give, we do not have less, we have more because when we give we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus we are reflecting the divine nature. As Jesus said "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). "I will bless you ..., so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). The Lord blessed Abraham so that he would be a blessing. How did He bless Abraham? He promised that from his seed would come the Savior of the nations. And Abraham believed that promise, trusted that the Lord would provide it just as He had promised. Thus everything Abraham did was colored by that promise. He willingly gave of himself and his household in service to the Lord in view of that promise. Our Father in heaven has richly blessed us. Not only has He given us everything that we need to support this body and life, but He has also provided that promised seed in His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the Savior of the nations. He is the Redeemer of the world. He is the One who has conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil by His death, resurrection, and ascension. Just as we are richly blessed, we are also thereby freed to be a blessing. Since God has endowed us with His gifts, we are set to endow others. Thus, we give of the blessings we have received so that others may be blessed. We do this in our homes, our communities, and our churches. We press the blessings God has lavished upon us in service to those around us. We use our time, our talents, and our treasures to be a blessing even as they have been a blessing to us. The Lord blesses us. And He enlists us to be a blessing to others. So, whenever you put that envelope in the collection plate, when you set out to serve at the local food pantry, when you sit down to help your kids with homework, think of this: The Lord has blessed you, so that you will be a blessing.

Taken from www.lcms.org