

Good News of Peace

June 2015 A.D.

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

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ:

We all know that we are living in a rapidly-changing world. Maybe sometimes, for better or worse, we feel a bit insulated from such change, or at least from the pace of such change, here in northern Michigan. But even here, we cannot help but be very much aware of the changes taking place everywhere around us. It is more than evident in the news. It is evident in the various forms of media by which we are surrounded – television, movies, music, the Internet, social media, etc. It is evident in our technology and the way we access and exchange information.

Our country and society are changing, too. Our priorities are changing. They have been for some time, in fact. Our values are changing. What is considered acceptable in terms of personal behavior and lifestyle choices, what is tolerated, what is promoted and encouraged – all of it is changing. Maybe not here quite as quickly as in other parts of the state and country, but these changes are still happening. And even we are not immune.

And all of these changes are changing the Church's place, role, and voice in our society. God Himself doesn't change, of course. His Word doesn't change. And that means that the Church's message and mission don't change. But how widely accepted the Church's message is in our society, and how freely the Church can maintain its position – those things can change. And they are changing. And those changes are inevitably, whether sooner or later, going to confront the Christian Church as a whole, individual Christian congregations like ours, and individual pastors with challenges we have never faced before in our country.

What happens when our society says that something is acceptable, and

God's Word calls it sin? The Church is placed in a very difficult position. However, it should be very clear to us as Lutheran Christians that the Church has no alternative other than to continue to speak the truth of God's Word, whether or not our society agrees with it. This has already been happening for some time, of course, with a variety of issues, from abortion and euthanasia to cohabitation (couples living together before marriage) and homosexuality.

But it is one matter when we are aware that these kinds of things are going on everywhere around us. And even when our government legalizes something that is clearly contrary to God's Word, such as abortion, but the Church still remains free to proclaim the truth of God's Word and not to participate in such activities. It is another matter entirely, however, when our government requires the Church to acknowledge such activities and even to participate in them. To some degree, that has already been happening in recent years. But more and more, it appears that the Church may well be put in this position with respect to one issue in particular – that of same-sex "marriage."

Depending upon how closely you follow the news, you may or may not know that in coming weeks the Supreme Court is expected to rule on this issue. Depending upon the nature of their ruling, drastic change may well be forthcoming as far as the Church's freedom to address this issue as we see fit without legal consequences and ramifications. This month, our Synodical President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, authored a letter to our Synod's pastors addressing this subject in some detail. Because this is such a significant issue for all of us, I would like to reproduce some of his letter for you here:

"In just a few weeks, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the legality of same-sex marriage in America and roll out the implications of that ruling

for individual states. I expect the ruling to create an alleged constitutional right to same-sex marriage, contrary to God's created orders, natural law and the inerrant Scriptures. This will be the earnest beginning of a very long struggle for faithful Christians who will, more and more, be driven from participation in the culture. We shall come to know and understand parts of the Word of God like never before. "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

Brothers, the battle has already been won. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has already defeated the foe. Satan surrendered at Golgotha. It is finished.

But what do we do? If the Supreme Court rules that same-sex marriage is legal in every state or must be recognized in every state, what is our response?

We stand fast (2 Thessalonians 2:15). We live in and by our Savior, who calls us to stay the course, to repent of our sin, to be in the Word of God and in prayer. We redouble our teaching on God's gift of marriage. And we show love and mercy to those harmed by the dissolution of God's ordering of marriage and family, intended for protection for all. We take legal action where absolutely necessary ...

The plan fits the nature of the Church: she is enduring and eternal. She speaks Christ's forgiveness and peace to men and women struggling with same-sex attraction and heterosexual attraction alike, in and out of season. She doesn't do flash-in-the-pan or drive-by ministry. She works in the world for the long haul. She doesn't change her tune or stop her singing. She keeps telling real people about a real Jesus, from black-robed Supreme Court justices to the protestors on the steps of that building to the young people in college watching the ruling unfold to those of us who never

imagined we would see this seismic shift in our lifetime. And she lives to demonstrate the mercy and love of Christ (1 John 3:15ff).

Most importantly, she speaks of the One who came for sinners — all sinners — and of the One who showed His love for us by dying for us. She simply stays the course ...

Legal marriage may be redefined, and outcomes we never imagined will occur. But these don't surprise or alarm us. The crumbling culture merely proves that what began in the Garden of Eden is still prevalent today, that we are sinners among sinners, that we are all in need of Christ's mercy and grace. This world is wending its way toward the end (Matthew 25). The story ends well (Revelation 7). That is what those in the pew and those disenchanted by the people in the pew need to hear, and will always need to hear, the most.

Beyond the theological consequences of this ruling, however, there are also practical implications, and I urge you to consider the following:

- (1) The Synod's legal team is carefully examining the potential ramifications of this case. It will likely be a messy ruling that will require time to unpack. We may discover that there is ultimately no constitutional protection for the Synod, its institutions, you or your congregation. We don't know, but we will be reporting back to you with our findings.
- (2) Your congregation should give serious thought to obtaining counsel from your own attorney. Also consider utilizing the [Synod's document on marriage policies for member congregations](#), which offers sample provisions limiting the use of church property to marriages that are consistent with LCMS beliefs. The day may come when even this legal protection will not be enough, but it may assist you and your congregational leadership in forestalling issues as long as possible.
- (3) Be prepared to discuss what marriage will look like in the future. Will LCMS pastors eventually be forced, as agents of the state, to perform same-sex

marriages? If that happens, will we be prepared to let the state perform the legal marriage ceremony, while we as pastors provide a religious ceremony for those marriages that are in keeping with our confession of faith as Lutheran Christians? We must have these discussions as pastors and as a Synod, and we may even need to make decisions at the next Synod convention in the summer of 2016.

- (4) Know that I, as Synod president, stand with you. What protections will the Synod or even the Constitution offer you? I don't know. But here is what I am personally sure of: The Gospel is enduring. It never changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. We as pastors are called to repent and to be faithful to Him — and to His Gospel — alone. Will we be fined for not performing same-sex marriages? Potentially. Will we be thrown in jail? Maybe. A recently deceased Catholic bishop (Cardinal George) described what I believe we shall now begin to face: "I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square. His successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization, as the church has done so often in human history."

Make no mistake, the battle has been won. The devil has been defeated. The Victor reigns triumphant in mercy, love and truth. The Gospel knows no limits, but proclaims the gracious kingdom of our Lord to all, through Christ's Word and Sacraments.

The temptation will be to run out into the melee, to abandon the home front or to give up all together. But we are called instead to repent, to be ready, to move confidently into the future, come what may. We speak the truth in love to all. We share Christ's forgiveness with each person He sets in our path.

And the Lord will work all things for good, even these trying times. He is faithful, brothers. He will do it."

May God bless and guide our Church and congregation, give us wisdom and peace, and continue to equip and strengthen us for our witness to the

truth of His Word in our rapidly-changing world!

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

For Your Prayers

In keeping with these concerns, please keep the following, recently shared by the Synod, in your personal prayers:

1. For the U.S. Supreme Court as it deliberates the very definition of marriage in our society: Help our justices to recognize Your will for families as the lifelong union of one man and one woman and to reflect that in the decision they render this summer.
2. For those who struggle with same-sex attraction: Help them, and all of us, to find in Your unfailing love the grace to deny all desires that are against Your will.
3. That we might have the spirit of wisdom and compassion, so that we may rightly speak Your words of judgment and mercy to all who will hear.
4. For the planned Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C.: Pray God's blessing upon this new endeavor of our Synod in our nation's capital to defend religious liberties and to support Lutherans working in government.
5. With thanksgiving for the many freedoms we enjoy as citizens of the U.S.: Please pray that God would preserve these freedoms here and around the world.
6. For Christians around the world who are persecuted for their faith: Strengthen them with Your Spirit and make them bold to confess Your saving name.
7. For life: that children would once again be welcomed and loved and that abortion would be overturned in America today.
8. For college students and military personnel, two groups who are profoundly affected by the government's intrusion into the realm of the Church: Keep them faithful to You, their Lord and Savior.
9. With thanksgiving for our military chaplains, who are under increasing pressure to remain silent about the faith: that they may continue to preach Christ.

10. For marriage: that the historic definition of marriage would be upheld and that husbands and wives would find in Christ's unfailing love for His bride the Church and her devotion and submission to Him, the pattern and power for their married life.
11. For LCMS congressmen and representatives: that they would be courageous in their defense of the truth and faithfully serve in the vocation in which God has placed them.
12. For President Obama: that he would lead the country with wisdom and uphold the rights – especially the freedom of religion – afforded in the U.S. Constitution.
13. For religious liberty: that our rights to live, worship and care for others may be upheld so that we may bear witness to Christ in all we do.
14. For all the citizens of the U.S.: that we would once again place value on the lives of all people, on marriage between a man and woman, and on the freedom to worship.
15. For LCMS staffers in Washington, D.C.: that they would remain faithful to God's Word, even when their jobs conflict with their beliefs.

Summer Bible Studies

As we are wrapping up our Spring Wednesday Evening Bible Class (on Wednesday, June 3), two mid-week Bible studies are tentatively being planned during the summer months this year. Plan to attend one or both. Please note that both studies will begin in June, take a roughly three-week break in July, and then resume in August.

Wednesday Morning 11:00 a.m.

Topic: Heaven and Hell (from the LifeLight Foundations series)
Beginning Wednesday, June 10

Wednesday Evening 7:00 p.m.

Topic: Christianity and the Competition
Beginning Wednesday, June 10

This study is an 8-session DVD-based series with Dr. Paul Maier, which takes a look at various world religions, what they teach, and how they compare to Christianity:

Introduction: The Credentials of Christianity

Session 2: The Far East Religions (Buddhism, etc.)

Session 3: The Middle East Religions (Judaism, etc.)

Session 4: Islam (Part 1)

Session 5: Islam (Part 2)

Session 6: Western Religions 1 (Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses)

Session 7: Western Religions 2 (the Cults and Scientology)

Conclusion: A Christian Response

Each session of this study is a stand-alone session, which means that members should feel free to come and go as you are able.

Interested in attending one or both of these studies but would like to see the meeting day or time adjusted to better suit your schedule? Or interested in a Bible study on another topic? Please see Pastor any time.

Highlights from the May Strategic Planning Meeting

Teaching was the category discussed by the Church Council on May 7. As we went through all the ideas that were provided by congregation members for this category, we found ourselves going back to the first goal statement that was written to go along with our Mission Statement: Increase the number of members participating in educational opportunities.

The Bible is the key for Caring, Reaching, Sharing, and Teaching, as well as strengthening Christian Faith.

Reading and studying the Bible became the main topic for our discussion during this planning session, and we began to realize that even with all the ideas provided for teaching, there are no easy answers for obtaining this goal, and this goal is the key for the entire planning process. The Bible may not be the easiest book to read, and I admitted during this discussion session that this is true for me. Therefore, Bible classes are the opportunity to learn by having explanations of what the content means. Some of the other things discussed in relation to this goal were:

- The location currently used for Sunday Morning Bible Class may not be the most-suitable setting.
- Having the feeling of being inadequate for answering questions related to the Bible.
- Are there other sources that should be used (the internet, for example) to encourage Bible Study?

Members of the congregation may have more input on what could be done or provided that would make Bible class an inviting event that encourages participation. We are open to your suggestions and input.

Report Submitted By: Ralph Zempel

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/.

June 2015 Schedule:

June 7

"Life Under God's Construction"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz

Do you see a "Road Construction Ahead" sign? Did God put it there?

(2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1)

June 14

"God's Great Work of Faith"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz

Faith is God's work, not ours.

(Mark 4)

June 21

"God's Ballast of Blessing"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz

When the waves begin to rock your boat, is Christ in the boat with you?

(Mark 4:35-41)

June 28

"You Aren't Perfect"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Ken Klaus

We aren't perfect and we can't change, but we can receive the benefits of Christ's perfection and sacrifice.

(Matthew 5:43-48)

Stewardship Corner

*We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.*

*May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blestest us,
To Thee our first-fruits give!* (LSB 781:1-2).

In many congregations these stanzas are sung every Sunday when the offerings of God's faithful people are received. It's a sung reminder of who God is and who we are in relation to Him, of what God does for us and gives to us, and how we respond to His generosity.

We are stewards of God's varied grace to us. As stewards we acknowledge that God owns all things and that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Him (1 Chron 29:14; Ps 24:1; Ps 100:3; 1 Cor 4:7; 1 Cor 6:19). Even we ourselves—all that we are and all that we have—are His. We are His because He created us, preserves

us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us. As the stewards of what He has done for us and given to us, we give of our first fruits to Him and His Church.

And the Lord receives them and presses them into a use all His own. He sanctifies it. He hallows it. He uses it to ensure that the Word of God is still preached among us. He uses it to ensure that there is water for Baptism, bread and wine for His Holy Supper. He uses what He gives to you and what you give back to Him for your good. Everything that happens in the church is purchased with the giving of the saints from what God has provided them. Holy giving from holy people pressed into holy service.

But there's more. For our giving does not just make the liturgical life of the church possible. It's not just the necessary means by which the vessels and sacramental elements, the hymn books and pastors are made available. The giving of God's stewards is part of the liturgy itself, part of the Divine Service. It is one of our responses within the liturgy where we, not just with words spoken or sung, but with deeds declare, live out and live in, the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). Our offerings are part of God's sanctifying work that He has us do in the Divine Service for the life of the world.

That's what makes our stewardship so precious and significant. God hallows what we give and employs it to sanctify us and others. And that is why we sing: "And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our first-fruits give!"

Taken from www.lcms.org

Missionary Support

At the May Voters Meeting on Sunday, May 10, our congregation committed to providing financial support to a new LCMS Missionary over the next three years. An initial \$500 contribution will be made this year on the congregation's behalf from fundraising funds, and we will re-evaluate our commitment for 2016. Additional information is available in the narthex. We will be formalizing our adoption agreement on Sunday, June 14.

Pictorial Directory

At the May Voters Meeting, we also approved going forward this year with a **new pictorial directory**. We will be working with Universal Church Directories this time around (a different company than the last time; visit www.ucdir.com for more info.) and will be hoping for a very positive congregational response so that we are able to have as complete a directory as possible. **Photos will be scheduled on the following dates (please note the slight change):** Wednesday, June 24, 2-8:30 p.m., Thursday, June 25, 2-8:30 p.m.; and Friday, June 26, 2-7:00 p.m. A make-up date will be scheduled for late July-early August. Sign-ups are available beginning today.

Spring Fest

The Board of Evangelism (with Lisa Coolman chairing) will be holding a Bake Sale during Spring Fest on Saturday, June 6th, from 10 am to 5 pm. Sign-up sheets are located in the narthex; workers and donations will be needed. Last minute donations are also welcome, but we would like to know ahead of time that we will have enough baked goods to sell. If you have any questions, please call Lisa Coolman at 734-0713. Thank you for your help!!

Just a Reminder... the Trustees cleaned out the two furnace rooms because they had become so packed with items that they had become a fire hazard. So please help us to keep them clean and safe. A **sign-up sheet for lawn cutting** is out on the table below the office window. If you could help with this, that would be great. There will be a day to show everyone how to run the equipment. A rotation schedule will also be made out so you may only have to mow once a month. Thanks for your help. *Board of Trustees*

Do you like to shop online?

The Amazon Smile program donates a portion of online sales to organizations such as Peace. In fact, Peace has already been issued a donation of \$6.27 for purchases made from January 1 through March 31. Bookmark <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3100896> so all of your eligible shopping will benefit Peace Lutheran Church. Thank you!!

"Outback Rock" VBS 2015

July 7 - 9

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Call 734-7621 for more info.

June Anniversaries

	Date	Yrs
Duane & Jessica Olden	6/1	8
Paul & Jennie Lewandowski	6/2	14
Karl & Peggy Zampich	6/5	22
John & Kelly Bruning	6/5	11
Ivan & Rose Buck	6/7	47
Dave &Carolynne Schaedig	6/9	53
John & Faye Roby	6/10	20
Rick & Nonnie Bannasch	6/14	40
Randy & Gail Martens	6/14	35
Larry & Jeanie Rhode	6/14	29
Tom & Laurie Catalano	6/15	30
Bill & Jane Claus	6/15	41
Chris & Melissa Schleben	6/16	3
Chris & Beth Dembny	6/17	15
Rick & Carol Mosher	6/20	17
Don & Marilyn Dimick	6/21	35
Gary & Nancy Mosher	6/24	20
Norm & Lilah Elowski	6/25	66
Jack & Bea Mosher	6/26	67

June Birthdays

Lori Wirgau	6/2
Nonnie Bannasch	6/3
Mark Kowalewsky	6/3
Gloria Sweeso	6/4
Peggy Schaudt	6/5
Ana Leigh Comerford	6/5
Bret Karsten	6/7
Matthew Augsburg	6/8
Kameron Curtis	6/8
Abigail Pflug	6/9
Susan Altman	6/10
Anthony Galloway	6/15
Mary Jo Hein	6/15
Scott Sorgenfrei	6/15
June Heller	6/20
Ajay Jumper	6/20
Larry Schaudt	6/20
Athena Blanton	6/20
Dale Sorgenfrei	6/23
Heather Hudock	6/23
Aiden Hudock	6/24
Russ Fairbanks	6/25
Gary Mosher	6/25
Austin Rothe	6/25
Jackson Bruning	6/26
Janet Langley	6/26
Laura Mertz	6/27
Lyle Schalk	6/27
Pam Bingle	6/28
Damian Lijewski	6/28
Norma Wirgau	6/29
Brenda Karsten	6/30
Morgan Suszek	6/30