



SUFFOLK SON SHINE

THE ONLINE NEWSLETTER OF THE SUFFOLK ZONE LWML

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IN THIS ISSUE:



A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD!

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COUNSELOR'S CORNER



What Does it mean to be “Lutheran”?

Sunday, October 29 is Reformation Sunday. This is the annual celebration of our Lutheran heritage. The Sunday marks the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther’s posting of the 95 Thesis on the Castle Door of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, thus stating his protests against the abuses of the church of his day. As we again approach this important date in our history as Lutherans, it is appropriate for us to ask the question, **“What does it mean to be Lutheran?”**

One of the disappointments and heartaches that I have in my ministry is what I perceive to be an “identity crisis” in Lutheranism. I have spent much time in discussion with colleagues and in various seminars discussing and examining, who we are as Lutherans, and why we exist today. As many of us look at American Lutheranism, we unfortunately see that there is a great misunderstanding about what it means to be Lutheran. From these conversations, and from my own observations over the past several years, I would like to offer six opinions of what it means to be truly Lutheran, especially in today’s world.

Lutherans are catholic! The word “catholic” means “from the whole”. To be “catholic” is to understand that there is a universal, consistent thread that ties the church together. The whole and history of the church is what has been handed down by the first Apostles to the Early Church through the Middle Ages to the time of the Reformation, right to today. There are many Lutheran churches and leaders who neglect the first 1500 years of Christian history prior to the Reformation, and build their doctrines and traditions only on the last 500 years of Lutheran history. In doing so, continuity is lost and the temptation exists to isolate ourselves and our identity. Properly understanding the church, her beliefs, and traditions, means examining how the various leaders and saints of the church have interpreted God’s Word and practiced their faith in all 2000 years since the birth of Christ, not just the last 500.

Lutherans are Liturgical! The universal “catholicity” of the church mentioned above has always exemplified itself in order and familiarity. Since the time of the Apostles, and even before that, God’s people have had specific order and directions for their time with God. The word “liturgy” comes from the Greek word for the “work of / for the people”. The Apostles, and the Church that flows from their teachings, established specific routines and practices, built upon God’s Word, aimed at bringing God’s people closer to Him, as the people grew in their knowledge and understanding of their God. These practices and order have been intended to bring people out of the routine of the daily lives, and into the presence of God and His love shown in Jesus Christ. To be involved in the liturgical life of the church, means being in the world, but not of the world. Therefore the church built its calendar and celebrations around the life of Christ and the story of our salvation. The church appointed specific readings throughout the year for the full growth and understanding of God’s people in a variety of topics, not just certain favorites. The church adopted specific architecture, color, clothing, and music to be different from the regular world - to give the people a piece of heaven... a foretaste of the feast to come. Every tradition in the church that has been handed down has a specific Biblical and Godly reason for its existence. These liturgical things are not to be taken lightly, ignored, and changed by every human whim, but to be understood, cherished, and applied to God’s people when appropriate.

Lutherans are Sacramental! The order and the directions of the liturgy have been held to throughout the history of the church for the sake of bringing the miraculous presence and forgiveness of God, our Heavenly Father and Creator, to us in the Sacraments. From the time of Christ and the Apostles, to us today, the Lord’s Day has been a day for His people to gather in their Baptisms and receive the victory over death in the Easter Resurrection of Jesus, which comes to His people in the Holy Supper. Right up until Luther’s day, it was unheard of for God’s people not to celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday, no less several times during the week. Baptism and Holy Communion are the bread and water of every Christian. As humans, we cannot survive without bread and water, and as Christians, the most healthy diet is the assurance of the waters of Baptism, and the bread of the Holy Eucharist.

Lutherans are Evangelical! The word “evangelical” comes from the word in Greek for “Gospel”. To be “Evangelical” is to gather in, and share the good news of salvation and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Sharing the Good

News is the key to being evangelical. Being “evangelical Lutherans” does not mean sitting off in a corner enjoying what Jesus has done for us, protecting what is ours, but, inviting as many as possible, from all backgrounds to join in these blessings. In recent Lutheran history, there have been some who have identified “evangelical” as only sharing the Good News with those who have “everything in common and are just like me.” True Lutheran identity today is still found in Jesus’ Words in Matthew 28 - **“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.....”**

Lutherans are not Protestant! Dr. Martin Luther and his contemporaries are known as “reformers”. To reform something means to fix or change it. This is completely different from the word “protestant”. That means to “go against”. It was never the intention of those first Lutherans to become their own church. The Reformers only spoke out against those new teachings that had crept into the church which were completely contradicted by God’s Word. The specific abuse was the selling of salvation. However, Luther and the Reformers kept everything else in the church as being beneficial. Around the same time as Luther, there were other leaders like Zwingli and Calvin, who in basic terms, started the whole concept of church all over - they threw out both the bad and the good. Liturgy and Sacraments were undermined and some eliminated, and the rational mind played a powerful role in their understanding of church. Understanding that Lutherans are not comfortable being “protestant” leads me to my final observation:

Lutherans are Temporary! Dr. Luther and the Reformers never wanted to be called “Lutheran” or have their own church. They considered themselves part of the catholic church. They were a movement, speaking out to fix what was wrong. When the church did not listen, Luther and the “Lutheran movement” were thrown out of the church and had no choice but to be on their own. Understanding Lutheran identity means understanding that we were born to fix what was broken, and once fixed, to go back home. Lutheran identity cannot be properly understood outside of a relationship with Roman Catholicism. Unfortunately, in the 500 years since the Reformation, far too many Lutherans have forgotten this relationship, and consider Lutheranism, a completely separate and unconnected thing. Though Lutherans, may be divided from Roman Catholicism for good reason, we are not excused from dialoging with the Roman Catholics, nor working for a better understanding of each other, in the hopes that some day, the wounds and sins which divided us nearly 500 years ago, may be healed and fixed. Many things have changed in both Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism, yet, how would we know, if we don’t bother trying to talk to them?!

This sure doesn’t sound like a joyful celebration of the Reformation, does it? Well, the Reformation should be a day of mixed emotions for us as Lutherans. We celebrate the boldness of certain saints who stood up in defense of the truth of God’s Word, yet, we are saddened that sin and error have divided God’s Church, something which is against His will and prayer (see John 17). I pray, that as we again mark our Lutheran heritage on Reformation Day, that many would come to seriously ask the question and examine, **“What does it mean to be Lutheran?”**

~ Pastor Schenkel



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can now access the Atlantic District LWML at it's new website? Go to www.adlwml.org to see the new set up! You can now receive the *Candlestick* online in PDF format, as well as many new features. Take a look!



FROM THE PRESIDENT



WHAT WILL YOUR COSTUME BE?

October 31st, the day the secular world celebrates “Halloween”, is only a few weeks away. For months now, I have been able to see the decorations, costumes and candy in all the stores. I used to have a lot of “scary” stuff that I would put outside to decorate including a “hand” that moved, but that all has been tossed long ago. Now I just have a few pumpkins that I display. I also put out a sign that says “Trick or Treat Stop” for the little kids.

Talking about treats, I haven’t bought any candy yet because past experience has shown that it would only be devoured and I would have to go out again and buy more. Maybe this year I’ll buy “lollipops”. I don’t like them – so I guess they will be safe until October 31.

I have to admit – I LOVE HALLOWEEN. Not for the reasons you think. I love to see the kids come to the door and see what costumes they are wearing. Some of them are very inventive and others are just so darn cute. I remember one year when my husband and I were first married, we went to a Halloween party. I wanted us to be unique as there would be a prize given out that evening. I WANTED THAT PRIZE. So, I made our costumes. I was a “flower” and my husband was a “bee”, antennae and stinger included. He looked absolutely ridiculous, but he was such a good sport – AND WE WON THE PRIZE!

I started thinking about costumes and what God says about our “costume”. In Ephesians 6, the apostle Paul speaks of the “full armor of God”. We need to put it on to “*stand against the devil’s schemes.*” We need to put it on “*so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground*”.

With all the evil darkness that surrounds us everyday, we need His armor. There is a spiritual battle going on all around us all the time, we need His armor. There is temptation all around us just waiting for us to say “yes”, we need His armor. There is the danger of complacency, we need His armor.

So I invite all of you to create your own costume this October 31 and wear it throughout the year, as Paul writes in Ephesians 6:14-17...

“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

By putting on the armor of God, He is the only weapon we will ever need against the evil one. And with Jesus, you too will win the freely given prize of salvation and eternal peace and life with Him.

Blessings to you all.
Ginny Wirsing

WALKING WITH JESUS



The store was over crowded with people all grabbing at whatever Halloween stock there was remaining on the shelves. I didn't do Halloween anymore. I played it down as much as possible within the confines of my own home. When the children were younger I was able to keep their focus more on the harvest theme and picking pumpkins. As they grew it became more and more difficult to keep them from getting all wrapped up in now what has almost become a National Holiday.

Now don't get me wrong. I used to love Halloween. When I was younger it seemed to be an innocent time of childish pranks and lots of candy. But over the years I have become more conscious of the true meaning of this day as well as whom this day actually gives praise to.

My son had just been enrolled in a new school and he was invited to a Halloween party by one of his classmates. It was a Christian school and I thought it would be a safe place for him to be. My dilemma was that he wanted to be the scariest person there and he wanted me to buy him a scary rubber mask.

So there we were among the crowds arguing about what he should wear or not to wear. It was like a verbal tug of war between me and him. That is when the epiphany swept over me like the tide at a beach. Yes I was responsible for him as my son, but some of the choices he has to make are HIS choices and HIS responsibility. The benefits or the consequences for these choices were on his shoulders not mine.

(I have to confess that I did give him the speech, "Now if Jesus walked into the party and saw you in the mask how would it make you feel...nothing like guilt to move a person, huh?")

Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

These same conditions apply to all believers too. We who just come to Jesus and accept Him as our Savior and Lord we need to drink the spiritual milk He richly provides through His word. As we continue to drink of this milk, we then reach a time to add meat to our diet of worship and praise. This happens as we dig into the Word, pray continuously, and walk the walk of faith.

Hebrews 5:11-14 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You needed milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use having trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Our ability to discern, to know right from wrong, grows as we grow and mature in our walk with Jesus. We need to pray, to read His word, to worship, and to commune with fellow believers within and outside the confines of our church's buildings.

The day we left the party store we had one scary mask as well as a Santa costume for my son to wear to his party. The choice was his. And let me tell you, my son looks great in red!



The Narrow Road

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Matthew 7:13-14.

In preparing for the upcoming Atlantic District LWML retreat at Tuscarora, I was thinking about last year's retreat, and the unplanned adventure I found myself in the middle of.

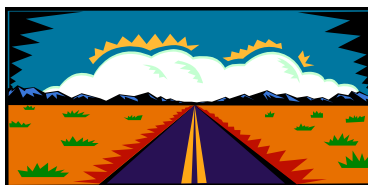
A few of my "gal pals" and I decided to spend the free time on Saturday afternoon by taking a ride into one of the local Pennsylvania towns to do some shopping. On our return to the retreat house, somehow we took a wrong turn and realized we were on the "wrong" side of the river. We could see where we had to go, but we just couldn't get there. We drove around and around. With no map to guide us, (come now, you really didn't expect us to have a map, did you???) we were just getting even more lost.

At one point we found ourselves on a very narrow mountain road. There appeared to be room for only one car to pass, and we were now two cars facing each other. By God's grace, and some very careful maneuvering by our driver, we were able to pass the other car safely.

God compares the life of His faithful to traveling on a narrow road. But, He has sent us the *Way* to travel that road. His Son Jesus Christ says, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me*". *John 14:6*

The narrow road to eternal life with Christ comes with many bumps and obstacles, hardships, danger and despair. But, if we "*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...*" He promises to see us safely through.

Deb Graybosch
October 2006





NEWS FROM AROUND THE ZONE: EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, PATCHOGUE NY

The ladies of Emanuel Lutheran Church have been very busy helping wherever they are needed. One of their favorite activities has been to make layettes and hold a baby shower with a Wishing Well, which, through Lutheran World Relief, benefits new moms all over the world. They also have been marking Bibles, through Lutheran Prison Ministry, and these are delivered to the jail at Riverhead.

Their hands keep busy making lap robes for the local nursing homes. During the winter months the ladies can be found in the kitchen making up soup mixes in a jar, and cookie mixes also. The donations from these mixes were sent to help the Katrina victims.

Another favorite activity of the ladies has been doing the Equal Exchange Coffee through Lutheran World Relief. The money obtained from selling various coffees goes back to the farmer and gives them a better life....and, the coffees are delicious! For many years the ladies made quilts donated to Lutheran World Relief, which are sent all over the world. Bake sales provided the funds for shipping the quilts.

They also have a Mite box Sunday on the 1st Sunday of each month. This goes to support the LWML Mission Grants.

For about 40 years, since the late 60's, the Women For Christ have served Emanuel with a religious book store. Emanuel still has its bookstore but it now operates independently.

Another project the women did that helped Katrina victims was the sale of soy candles made by a Lutheran family in Kansas.

At Christmas time the ladies usually visit Emanuel's shut-ins and also take them a gift.

These ladies have been very busy using all the gifts God has given them to help make someone's life a little better.

Submitted by: Marie Paxson

“Serve the Lord with Gladness!” (Psalm 100:2)

SUFFOLK ZONE LWML MINI-RETREAT



*“Always Changing
Always the Same”*

*Enjoy inspiration, Bible study, fellowship, food, singing,
and celebrating the seasons with friends.
Be sure to dress casually and bring your Bible.*

Date: Saturday, October 21, 2006
Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm
Place: ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH
2nd Avenue, St. James, NY
Cost: \$16 per person (includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: October 14, 2006
(No registrations will be taken at the door)

For more information please contact Ginny Wirsing at 924-7106 or
Linda Guterres at 924-1776

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PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE SUFFOLK ZONE LWML MINI- RETREAT

Name _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____ e-mail address _____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR BIRTHDAY MONTH: JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUNE
JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

- ◆ I have enclosed my check (\$16.00) payable to Suffolk Zone LWML. I understand there are no refunds after the Registration Deadline of October 14, 2006.

Please mail registration form and payment to:
Linda Guterres
3 Timber Trail Lane
Medford, NY 11763



PRAISE THE LORD...GOD IS GOOD...ALL THE TIME...GOOD NEWS!!!

We are now in the process of working on mission grant #3: “Preparing God’s Children for Life” in the amount of \$3,000. The Lutheran Church and School of Our Saviour in the Bronx, NY, seeks to “prepare God’s children for life”. Ninety-five percent of the school children are non-Lutheran and two-thirds are not baptized. This grant will enable Our Saviour to set up a scholarship fund to reach more unbaptized children and bring them into the school. Through this program, the church/school will be able to establish an outreach to these children and their families, and bring them into the church family through baptism.

**PLEASE CONTINUE
TO
SEND
IN
YOUR
MITES
MONTHLY**

Please forward all mites to:

Clara E. Wert, 18 Westland Avenue, Queensbury, NY 12804. Please note “mites” in the memo area of the check.

JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT!



At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny, a child in the kindergarten class, seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying as though he were ill, and said, "Johnny what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."