

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

43 N 3rd St., Hilbert, WI 54129

Office: (920) 853-3217

October 2021

From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Grace, mercy, and God's peace to each and every one of you from our risen, victorious, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

One of the more under-utilized aspects of pastoral ministry is the idea of private confession and absolution. Yes, we confess our sins on Sundays at each. Yes, we confess our sins in our daily prayers and devotions and those are very wonderful gifts that God gives to us in our daily battle with sin. There are though sometimes when our sins may be so grievous in our minds, and so terrible that we may just need to talk to your pastor and here the forgiveness in a more personal way.

Private confession and absolution offer you this wonderful opportunity to confess and to receive the forgiveness of sins. At my vows that I took when I became ordained and installed at the various churches that I have been blessed to serve, I take a vow of silence and confidentiality. In another words, I will not disclose what is shared with me when you wish to have private confession and absolution. The only time I would break that vow is when there was a threat to you, or to someone else. That threat would be of a physical nature to oneself or to another individual. Those situations are very rare but do come up at times.

Private confession and absolution are a way to unburden yourself of a particular sin or sins and hear the comforting words of forgiveness as if from God Himself!! When the Lutheran princes approached Emperor Charles V in 1530 and presented the Augsburg Confession, they stated the following in Art. XI:

It is taught among us that private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse. However, in confession it is not necessary to enumerate all trespasses and sins, for this is impossible. Ps. 19:12, "Who can discern his errors?" Also, Luther wrote the following regarding private confession and absolution: Private confession should be retained in the church, for in it consciences afflicted and crushed by the terrors of sin lay themselves bare and receive consolation which they could not acquire in public preaching. We want to open up confession as a port and refuge for those whose consciences the devil holds enmeshed in his snares and whom he completely bewitches and torments in such a way that they cannot free or extricate themselves and feel and see nothing else but that they must perish. For there is no other greater misery in this life than the pains and perplexities of a heart that is destitute of guidance and solace (Luther's Works 6:297-298 AE).

Elsewhere, he said: *For this reason, I have a high regard for private confession, for here God's word and absolution are spoken privately and individually to each believer for the forgiveness of his sins, and as often as he desires it, he may have recourse to it for this forgiveness, and also for comfort, counsel, and guidance. Thus, it is a precious, useful thing for souls, as long as no one is driven to it with laws and commandments, but sinners are left free to make use of it, each according to his own need, when and where he wishes; just as we are free to obtain counsel and comfort, guidance, and instruction when and where our need or our inclination moves us. And as long as one is not forced to enumerate all sins but only those which oppress him most grievously (Luther's Works 37:368 AE).* -Excerpts From Lutheran Witness, May 4th, 2014.



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

LWML Sunday: Women in Mission will be celebrating LWML Sunday on October 3. Following a special Worship Service, you are invited to a coffee and cake time in the Fellowship Hall. We will also be sharing our Mission Grant bookmarks that list all of the grant projects selected at our LWML convention in June. This bookmark can remind you of all the people who benefit from the mites you drop in your mite box or into the larger mite box in the narthex. You will also find the larger mite box in the Fellowship Hall during our LWML Sunday coffee hour. We invite everyone to join us.

Fall Rally: Our Fall get-together with the ladies of our zone will be held on Saturday, October 23. We will meet at St. Martin Lutheran in Chilton at 8:15 for a continental breakfast followed by our brief meeting update and a speaker from Calumet County Harbor House, Stephanie Schulz. She will share information about the needs of some of the women in our area. We will also be collecting Gifts from the Heart for the Harbor House agency. These items can include: laundry baskets, liquid laundry detergent, new twin-sized bed sheets, paper towels, pillows, towels, women's shaving gel and razors, baby wipes, heating pads, hair dryers, bathroom cleaner, 33-gallon sized trash bags, or gift cards from Walmart, Target or Pick-n-Sav. We are asked to NOT bring travel size or sample size of any of these items. We hope that many ladies will join us and choose to share items with the hurting women in our area.

Save the Date: It's not too early to make plans to attend the LWML SWD Winter Getaway. This will be held on February 4 and 5, 2022, at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells. The retreat is Friday evening

and Saturday. LWML retreats are an enjoyable time with like-minded women, and are a great multi-generation time to listen to mission speakers and participate in Bible study. The Clarion also has a nice pool area. More information is available on the lwml-swd website. Our theme will be The Joy in Christ's Mission based on Philippians 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (How many of you can't help but sing that verse!?) Start thinking about attending. It makes a nice girls weekend away, as some people continue their own retreat into Sunday. As always, there are scholarship funds available if cost is an issue. The due date for scholarship applications is December 1. A weekend at the Winter Getaway is also a nice Christmas gift!

Upcoming Gifts from the Heart: Keep watching the newsletter and bulletins for information about our November, December and January Gifts from the Heart gatherings.



Mission Matters

Pastor Appreciation Month

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, and it brings to mind all the men preparing to become pastors at our seminaries. Each year, a growing percentage of the men at seminary are second career men with families. A significant amount of their daily needs is provided by the Food and Clothing Co-op at each campus. Some of the food, such as meat and fresh produce, is purchased by the co-op. However, a larger percentage of the needed food and paper/cleaning/hygiene products is donated by individuals, families or companies who desire to assist seminary students and their families during their years of study.

Another big asset for the seminarians at Fort Wayne is the Over-the Counter (OTC) medicine cupboard located in the co-op and supplied

totally by donated items. Here the families are able to find things such as aspirin, acetaminophen, cold remedies, allergy pills or creams, antacids, diaper creams or many other donated items that would normally be purchased at area pharmacies or general stores.

Seminarians and their families earn points to receive items by working selected hours in the co-op each month. Many pastors have told how the co-op was a major source of their household needs during their years of education. This service is also available to the deaconess students and their families.

Tuesday, October 12, is Seminary Donation Day. Many years we have had access to someone from the district who will be travelling to Fort Wayne on that day and we have been able to send along our donated items. This year, we do not know of anyone who will be attending this event. Therefore, during a recent conversation with Deaconess Katherine Rittner, Director of the Food and Clothing Co-op, she suggested that instead of shipping items, gift cards designated to purchase items for the co-op would be helpful. These gift cards can also be used by the co-op as Christmas gifts for the students. Another way to donate is to order things online and have them delivered to the co-op. In addition, we have a member who has offered to pay for shipping of items specifically for the OTC cupboard. These gifts may be brought to the Fellowship Hall on October 3 and will be mailed in time for delivery on October 12.

*** And last, but not least, join us in the Fellowship Hall on LWML Sunday to show appreciation to our pastor, Pastor Mark Peterson! We feel most blessed to have him in our midst as our Shepherd.



Five Ways to Celebrate Pastor Appreciation Month



October is Pastor Appreciation Month and there's still plenty of time to show the leaders of your congregation what their work means to you.

From coming up with fresh sermon ideas every single week to being responsible for the administration and spiritual care of congregations, pastors dedicate significant energy and time to their calling.

Here are five ways you can show your pastor—and his family—what it means to you.

Express Gratitude

Something as simple as a hand-written card can send a strong message. Include information about specific sermons or conversations that encouraged you or helped you. Don't be stingy with your words. Paying special attention the pastor's wife and family will show them that you truly understand and value their contributions to your congregation. If you or anyone you know makes art or gifts by hand, these will be truly memorable tokens that come with a clear message, "We're glad you're here. Thank you."

You can also enlist the help of the congregation to express their gratitude publicly. Take an informal poll of everyone's favorite memories with the pastor and what they admire most about him. Surprise him by having someone read it during the service. If you include personalized attention to the pastor's family, it will be a home run.

Encourage Self Care

Most pastors know they "should" take more time off, spend more time on their hobbies or leave work on time. However, it can be a real challenge and for many pastors, because it never quite seems like the right time. Give the pastor a coupon for an afternoon or even a Sunday off, and put an expiration date on it. To really go above and beyond, include some movie passes or tickets to an event he will enjoy.

Offer Quality Time with Loved Ones

Hiring a babysitter seems like a simple thing. But many families, especially those with pastors, tend to reserve this for the times they "have to," like family weddings or evening church functions. Find out who your pastor likes to hire to watch his children and cover the cost for a date night. If you know his family, you can also volunteer for the childcare duties. Find out what he and his family would enjoy doing, as a family or a night on the town. Musical tickets, Christian concert tickets, hotel reservations and new restaurants are just a few options.

Gifts and Experiences

This option has a wide range of possibilities. A great place to start is with gift cards or fresh meat and food subscriptions (especially useful in rural areas). Additionally, ask your leadership to consider paying for the pastor's wife to attend one of the events for pastors' wives. If you have a lake house or other vacation property, consider letting the pastor and his family use it for a well-earned getaway.

These experiences can include you, too. Make an offer of friendship or fellowship, such as inviting

the pastor and his family over for dinner and games. It's easy to forget that pastors are people who crave the simple joys of genuine friendship.

Help Grow the Community

Finally, invite friends to church events and programs, making sure to include a compliment of your pastor when you bring them. Pastors want to see the community grow. Let them know how you're willing to share your gifts and resources to help make that happen.



God Bless You

By Rachel Bomberger

I don't know why I thought I'd be able to mediate the heated dispute between two neighbors on the jogging trail that day. Blessed are the peacemakers, I guess?

Whatever my intentions, the intervention failed miserably. Some situations can't be defused by even a well-intended bystander, and it's folly to try.

Simmering with anger, anxiety and frustration — feelings my long runs are supposed to eliminate, not exacerbate — I finally turned to go. But first: "Blessings on your day!" I shakily bleated out.

Why did I say it? Perhaps I said it because I was feeling absolutely desperate to salvage some shred of peace and dignity from the ugly exchange. Perhaps I said it because I was thinking curses and wanted to do and say something out loud in defiance of that sinful urging. Perhaps I said it because, despite the awful encounter, I wished (or, at least, wanted to wish) good things and not bad for my contentious neighbor — a woman I had never met before and haven't seen since. Perhaps I said it because it's just something I say.

I can't be sure why I said it. I can be sure of how she heard it. Her reaction was palpable, almost physical; her response memorable.

“Oh, I’m not a God person. You can take that back. I don’t want it.”



The B-word

What sane and decent person would reject a word of blessing?

Before this graceless encounter, I had never thought of “blessing” as a particularly partisan or inflammatory word. I recognized some religious overtones, but not heavy ones, and not exclusively Christian ones, either. Jews give blessings. So do Buddhists.

In common American spiritual parlance, the word “bless” is so ubiquitous as to be practically meaningless. We say “bless you!” when someone sneezes and carelessly bandy about “bless your heart” in both sincere and sometimes heavily ironic contexts. We “ask a quick blessing” before meals. We buy tumblers and T-shirts that declare us “too blessed to be stressed,” and clutter up Instagram with photos depicting our #blessed lives (over 136 million posts as of this writing). Thanks to thoughtless overuse, this humble little word has become about as stale and trite as the “thoughts and prayers” we promise after major tragedies: something people say, just because, without any deep thought or true intention.

Or perhaps I should qualify: It’s something *some* people say, just because. Speaking anecdotally: I hear churchgoers say it more than non-churchgoers. “Spiritual” people use it more than unspiritual people. Women more than men. Red states more than blue states. Evangelicals more than mainline Protestants. On the other end of the ideological spectrum: People who practice yoga seem to me a fair bit more likely to say it than people who don’t.

So (still speaking anecdotally) if you are a Red-state, church-going Evangelical woman who considers herself spiritual and maybe practices a little yoga on the side, you may use the word a lot. If you are not *that kind of person*, you are a lot less likely to use it.

If, as I found out on the trail that day, you harbor feelings of deep resentment toward *that kind of person*, you may find the word irritating, passive-aggressive or even viscerally repulsive. (Anecdotally, of course.)

A good and sacred word

Maybe, though, my neighbor was right to be repulsed. Just because a word has been overused and decontextualized to the point of triteness doesn’t stop it meaning what it means. But what does it really mean to bless someone? To be blessed?

From [Wikipedia](#), I learn that the word “bless” is derived from the Old English word *blædsian* — marked with blood — which described something or someone “made sacred or holy by blood sacrifice,” as practiced in the Germanic paganism of the Anglo-Saxon period. It’s a sacred word, intimately connected to religious rituals and the divine favor those rituals are intended to curry.

I learn, too, that the concept of blessing is present not just in those old pagan traditions but in all five major world religions today: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Speaking more specifically in the context of the three Abrahamic traditions, I learn that “‘to be blessed’ means to be favored by God, the source of all blessing.”

But I want to know more. As I go deeper, I learn that, in Scripture, there are two words most often translated from the Greek as “bless,” “blessing” or “blessed.”

One, *eulogia* (εὐλογέω), literally means “a good word.” This is the word we most often see translated as the verb “bless.” To bless someone is to speak well of them, to pray for them, to ask favor for them and (insofar as you have the means and authority to do so) to bestow favor upon them.[1] It is the opposite of cursing.

To bless someone, simply put, is to speak words that invoke a state of blessedness in a person's life.

#Blessed

But what does such a state of blessedness look like?

This is where the other word, the adjective, *makarios* (μακάριος) — “blessed” — comes in.

Ancient Greeks used this word to describe the state of “transcendent happiness of a life beyond care, labour and death,” applying it especially to those “who have attained to the supraterritorial life of the gods.”^[2]

To the old pagans it meant happiness, but also virtue and good fortune — two ideas that were closely wedded in Greek culture, since fortune was understood not merely as a random and inanimate force but as a gift of the gods to those who pleased them. It was a heavenly happiness.

In the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, *makarios* takes on more nuanced shades of theological meaning. Here all blessing (*eulogia*) involves the explicit acknowledgment that “God is the Giver of all blessedness.”^[3] To be blessed is to enjoy fullness of life that includes earthly happiness, but not as a result of one's own effort or success. Blessedness is always God's gift.

More than this, blessedness is a kind of happiness that endures beyond suffering, a special kind of joy that comes from having a right standing before God. That man is blessed who “walks not in the counsel of the wicked” (Psalm 1:1), “against whom the Lord counts no iniquity” (Psalm 32:2), “who makes the Lord his trust” (Psalm 40:4). Such a man can declare with a glad and thankful heart, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!” (Psalm 34:8).

Happy for the right reasons

In the New Testament, the eschatological implications of *makarios* are fully on display. When uttered by Christ and His apostles, this

word “refers overwhelmingly to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.” Whereas Jewish theologians in the Septuagint often used the word to describe earthly gifts from a divine giver, in the New Testament both Giver and gifts are divine: “all secular goods and values are now completely subsidiary to the one supreme good.”^[4]

Consider again the words of Jesus in the Beatitudes (literally, the “Blesseds”):

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

(*Matt. 5:3–11*)

There's a lot of happiness in these promises, but it's not the kind you can put in the bank, and you may have to wait a long while to see it fully manifest.

“Blessed,” in New Testament context, refers to one kind of happiness above all: the perfect and everlasting joy of life in Christ.

To be “blessed,” then, is not just to be happy. It is to be happy for all the right reasons — to be happy in and because of Christ.

To bless and not curse

Maybe when my irate neighbor rejected the word of blessing I so awkwardly offered her, she was simply venting her annoyance at yet another sanctimonious goody-two-shoes trying to score points in an argument with a trite and vaguely condescending expression. It’s certainly possible.

I suspect, though, that in that moment, she was actually taking my words more seriously — and more honestly — than I was myself.

I blurted them out knowing only that I wanted to bless and not curse. I hoped to close a painful moment with a positive word and to make sure she knew that, despite our kerfuffle, I wished only good things for her and not bad.

Isn’t this what most people hear and think and mean when they speak of blessing and being blessed? Good health and harmonious relationships? A comfortable home, a satisfying job, professional success, money in the bank? Aren’t these all blessings? Aren’t we blessed when we possess them?

My neighbor wisely understood, however, that the word I chose means more than that. “I’m not a God person,” she said. She recognized, even if I didn’t fully in that moment, that I wanted more for her than just the usual litany of earthly “blessings.” I wanted her to know the peace of being made righteous before God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I wanted her to experience the eternal love and joy that can only come from participating fully in His life.

In short, I wanted her to be happy for all the right reasons.

She didn’t want any of that — not then, and probably not now.

I hope she will change her mind someday, but I have no reason to expect it. Though I’m saddened by her decision, I do respect it.

I’m chastened, too. I will speak words of blessing more carefully and intentionally in the future.

A priestly blessing

The word “bless” is a deep word. A powerful word. We use it lightly or flippantly at our peril. When we say it, we ought to mean it — fully.

So when I tell you I’m blessed, I really mean that God has created, redeemed and sanctified me by the blood of Christ; that He has graciously brought me to saving faith by the power of His Spirit; that He is generously filling my life with good things, now and forever.

And when I say, “God bless,” what I really mean is that I want nothing less than all of this for you.

I have prayed for my neighbor since that painful episode, asking forgiveness for my part in our conflict and expanding on the prayer I unwittingly began in her presence. Now, as I relive the story in my mind, I’m praying again, this time in the familiar words of the priestly blessing I look forward to receiving at the end of every Divine Service:

The Lord bless [her] and keep [her].

The Lord make His face shine upon [her] and be gracious unto [her].

The Lord lift up His countenance upon [her] and give [her] peace. (*LSB*, p. 202)

Blessings on your day, friends. I really mean that.

[1] William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 407–409.

[2] Friedrich Hauck and Georg Bertram, “*Μακάριος, Μακαρίζω, Μακαρισμός*,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 362–70. Hereafter, TDNT.

[3] TDNT, 362–70.

[4] TDNT, 362–70.

Featured image: Getty Images



October

- 6 Brynn DuPrey
- 8 Terry Hackbarth
Dennis DuPrey
- 10 Adam Hernke
Corey Manders
- 11 George Schroeder
- 12 Christine Hillegas
Oliver Ott
- 13 Silas Ott
- 14 Eva Kamps
Minda Hernke
Brecken Roehrig
- 15 Gerald Schroeder
- 18 Brad Diener
Nelson Teinert, Jr.
- 20 Emily Schmid
- 21 Joshua Schaffer
- 24 David Zuelke
- 25 Jeff Voigt
Dan Koffarnus
- 27 Cheri Koffarnus
- 29 Joshua Hein
Justin Hein
- 30 Connie Tennessen
Jerilyn Fochs
- 31 Debbie Brantmeier

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

October

- 1st Jonathon & Crysta Ladwig
- 10th Wes & Amanda Pompa
- 17th Dennis & Grace Roehrig
- 18th Richard & Jennifer Vander Sande
- 19th Dan & Sally Grimmer
- 22nd Benjamin & Jody Behnke
- 25th David & Debbie Brantmeier
- 26th Harold & Judy Paulson
Dan & Linda Schroeder
- 30th Dan & Connie Diener
- 31st Dan & Cindy Koffarnus

Our Response to His Love

	9-05-21	8-29-21	8-22-21	8-15-21
General Fund	\$1506	\$581	\$1645	\$1279
Missions	\$5	\$30		
Memorial – Gerald Schroeder	\$25			
Totals	\$1536	\$611	\$1645	\$1279

October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Greeters: 3rd Donna Marose 10th Bonnie Teinert 17th Ron & Dolores Bornemann 24th DeAnn Eldred 31st Deb Manders	Altar Guild: Dan & Cindy Koffarnus				1	2
3 19th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School LWML Sunday	4	5 7:00p Revelation Bible Study	6 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	7 7:00p Joint Committee Meeting @ St. Luke	8	9
10 20th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Sunday School	11 Columbus Day	12 1:00p W.I.M. Meeting & Bible Study 7:00p Revelation Bible Study	13 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	14 6:30p Elders Meeting 7:00p Council Meeting	15	16
17 21st Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	18	19	20	21	22	23 LWML Rally @ St. Martin Chilton 8:15a
	District Pastors Conference @ La Crosse					
24 22nd Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Voters Meeting/Sunday School	25	26	27 4:00p Confirmation Class @ St. Luke	28	29	30
31 Reformation Day <i>Red</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	Newsletter articles due	7:00p Revelation Bible Study				

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion