

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

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August 2022

From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Greetings fellow saints in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Last month I wrote about the declining church attendance in the United States and the demographics behind these trends. This newsletter will continue to focus on this decline but with a different emphasis. The emphasis is on worship, and how we worship.

There has been a trend in society where people love to be entertained. Who does not enjoy going to a movie, a play, or even a music concert? My first concert was the Beach Boys and the Moody Blues in Omaha, Nebraska. I was thoroughly entertained by all the music, the light shows, and laser shows that made for quite a production. In full transparency, I also have had the opportunity to attend contemporary worship services at the so-called mega-churches and what was astounding to me was that these “worship” services were more for entertainment purposes than hearing God’s Word. The people that attending were caught up in the moment so to speak. Their emotions and feelings ruled the day. Let me illustrate with this example. Have you ever felt in a bad mood? Or maybe in a good mood? Feelings and emotions are very much like chafe in the wind. Feelings and emotions are never consistent. God’s Word is. Building one’s faith on emotions and feelings is like building a foundation on sinking sand. Faith built on these emotions lead people astray.

It is this aspect of our emotions and feelings over-ruling what God’s Word says, is a reason why so-called liturgical churches, such as the LCMS are experiencing a decline in membership. A good example of feelings and emotions dictating our theology is a conversation that I had with a friend who considered himself a very good Christian, was very pietistic and believed whole-heartedly in what we call decision theology. Decision Theology is the belief that we somehow cooperate with God in our salvation. We make the decision to follow Christ. Communion is a way in which we show God our love and others that we are good Christians. Baptism is something that we do, and not what God does for us. The emphasis is again on the “me” and not what God has done.

In this conversation with my friend, he indicated that one of the problems with the LCMS is that we do not have altar calls, our worship is stale and repetitive (which I found ironic because the majority of contemporary Christian music is very repetitive), and that we are bound by traditions and not the current societal trends that are out there. He continued with his rant, and then I brought to his attention that the LCMS does indeed have altar calls every 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday, and that some LCMS churches have altar calls every Sunday. “We call these altar calls Holy Communion”. I further shared with him that we believe that it is God who calls, who serves, and who gives us peace of mind by the forgiveness of sin.

It is this mindset of decision theology that is a reason for declining church attendance in the LCMS and other liturgical churches, because the emphasis is on what we do, and not what God does. People like to be in control, and they like to have their emotional highs, and it is this reason that emotions and feelings overrule sound theological instruction. Our feelings and emotions are very powerful and wonderful gifts from God. Yet, they should never take the place of God Himself.

What do we in the LCMS have to offer people who are falling away from the church and those who need a church? The answer is simple but multi-faceted as well. First off, we offer sound theological

principles based on the Theology of the Cross, which means we focus on what God has done for us in spite of how we are feeling on a given day, or our emotional state of mind. Take the above conversation that I had with my friend. In the Sacrament of Holy Communion (an LCMS altar call). Communion is not something that we do to show God how much we love Him. Holy Communion is what God is doing for us. That makes all the difference in the world. In the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, God chooses us, we do not choose Him. In Baptism, God makes us His children. He forgives us our sins and we are adopted into His family.

I could go on and on. In future newsletters I will be addressing the whole issue of worship, the sacraments and the whole theology that guides us. For the church to continue to grow, we should not compromise with people's feelings and emotions. Instead, we should always focus on what we believe, teach, and confess. In the end, people will be more thankful for what God has done for them in Christ.

I hope that you all enjoy the rest of your summer, because in the fall we will be ramping up with bible studies that will focus on what it means to be a Lutheran, Sunday School, Confirmation classes and other events that will be of interest to you. On a personal note, I have enjoyed my first year here as your pastor very much. I also appreciate the love and the kindness you have shown not only to me, but to my mom and my sister.

In His Grip



Pastor Peterson



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

August

- 4th Nelson Jr. & Jessica Teinert
- 8th Ron & Dolores Bornemann
- 9th Ron Jr. & Lori Ott
- 11th Kyle & Amanda Hackbarth
- 21st Tom & Betty Ruppenthal
- 26th Gary & Sandra Mirsberger
- 30th Chad & Amber Roehrig



August

- 3 Alyssa Ecker
- 4 George Krepline
- 5 Arianna Nunes
- 8 Rhylee Koehler
Abel Weyenberg
- 19 Dean Schroeder
- 23 Susan Hostettler
- 27 Emily Sowinski
- 28 Caroline Hilton
- 29 Bonnie Teinert
- 31 Joyce Krepline
John Lau

Our Response to His Love

	7-10-22	7-3-22	6-26-22
General Fund	\$1455.50	\$2333	\$816
Missions		\$70	\$5
Totals	\$1455.50	\$2403	\$821



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Back to School - Gifts of the Heart

You may have noticed that the ingathering tub is already set up for our Back to School gifts. School starts on September 1, and we will deliver our items prior to that date. Any items that are useful for school children will be most helpful. Please see the display on the bulletin board. Let's help provide for our less fortunate students. Our donations are always eagerly received by the staff at the school as many children arrive without needed supplies.

Fall Retreat

It's time once again to register for the LWML SWD Fall Retreat! This year we will be meeting in Fond du Lac which is much closer than many of our retreats. The dates are September 23-24, but the registration deadline is August 26. Our theme is "Empowered By God's Grace" under the theme verse "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me", Phil. 4:13. Check out the bulletin board for more details or registration forms or ask Bonnie or Judy for more information. Registration is \$60, and includes lunch on Saturday. The retreat begins Friday evening.

Room reservations are to be made directly with the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center; rates are \$159 for two queen beds for four people or \$149 for a king bed for two people. Rates include breakfast on Saturday morning. For reservations contact The Radisson Hotel, 920-923-1440, and the group code is LWML-South Wisconsin District 2022 Fall Retreat. Reservation deadline for the reduced rate is August 26.

The speaker is Karol Selle who will be sharing 'Knowing our God-given gifts and using them to enrich the lives of others as well as our own'.

Karol is an educator, graphic designer and editor. Her current LWML position is chairman of the Heart to Heart – Sisters of All Nations Committee. She is an engaging speaker and will encourage us in our daily walk with God. We will also have Bible study and mission speakers.

Meeting Dates

Once again, a reminder that we will not have a meeting in August, but will start our monthly meetings again in September on the 2nd Tuesday afternoons. Join us for fellowship and Bible study as well as planning for future events.



Mission Matters

This month I want to share with you one of the missions available at Fort Wayne Seminary. Many of the students, both pastor students and deaconess students, come to seminary without significant support. Some come right from college without having meaningful jobs, and others are second career students who give up their jobs and have families to support. One of the very helpful programs at the seminary is the Food and Clothing Co-op. Within that center is a cabinet full of over-the-counter pharmacy items. This year we have an opportunity to send items for this cabinet to Fort Wayne with our LWML SWD President as she attends the Fort Wayne Presentation Day. If you care to donate any over the counter medications or personal care items for seminary students and their families, there will be a second container in the narthex. These will be taken along to the Fall Retreat to give to Cinda Poppe as she gathers items for this mission. Cinda is especially happy to be attending this event this year as one of their sons will be starting seminary as a second career student. He is currently a Lutheran educator. Cinda's husband, Rev. Randy Poppe, now retired, was confirmed by our former pastor, Rev. Carl Rathjen! Small world, isn't it?? If you can donate one bottle of baby aspirin or cough syrup or other such items, think how helpful this could be to a seminary family. They can also use gift cards for area pharmacies such as Walmart or Walgreen. As your former parish nurse, this project is especially dear to me.



The Passive Life: God's gifts in a frantic world

By Stacey Egger



“It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:17).

The long days of summer continue to fly by. School is out. Offices are sparsely populated as workers take long-awaited trips. Sports and clubs are on hiatus. Countless fairs, festivals and summer activities vie for our attention.

Our culture tells us that we should relax. We have earned it. We need to cultivate a work-life balance. As Christians, it is worth evaluating our culture's narrative of both work and leisure.

Despite centuries of technological advancements that make their lives easier, many people still seem frantically busy. G.K. Chesterton grounds this busyness in laziness:

It is customary to complain of the bustle and strenuousness of our epoch. But in truth the chief mark of our epoch is a profound laziness and fatigue; and the fact is that the real laziness is the cause of the apparent bustle. Take one quite external case; the streets are noisy with taxicabs and motorcars; but this is not due to human activity

but to human repose. There would be less bustle if there were more activity, if people were simply walking about.[1]

Over the generations, American society has defined success by work and industriousness. But the younger generations have a dawning anxiety that they are being kept from something deeper. Despite time-saving devices, they obsess over the passing of time and with “using it” efficiently. They seek activities and practices that rejuvenate them, heal them, make them “truly themselves.” Watching a movie or two after work. Rock climbing. Video games. Quilting club. Cooking. Therapy. Time with friends.

Older generations see the younger generations as lazy, devoid of work ethic and interested only in rest; younger folks see the older generations as lifeless workaholics, incapable of rest.

So which side is right? Are both? The Creation account shows us that man was given the pattern of work and rest by God even before the fall. God “took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work” (Gen. 2:15). Yet God also made the Garden of Eden full of things to delight him and give him rest.

The reality, which should not surprise us, is that the way we see work and the way we see rest are two sides to one bent coin: Both are distorted by sin. The fall has perverted not only work but also rest.

Acedia

A recent issue of *The Lutheran Witness* explored the vice of *acedia*, or sloth. Often, we consider *acedia* to be the opposite of work. But in fact, this vice was traditionally considered an offense against the Third Commandment, which commands us to rest in God. *Acedia*, that human tendency warned against by the church over centuries, was traditionally considered a failure of the human soul to find its true *rest*.

Idleness can be a result of *acedia*. But so can filling our lives with work and activity.

Written against the “total work” mentality of post-World War II Germany, German philosopher Josef

Pieper explained the source of man's difficulty with genuine rest: "that man mistrusts everything that is without effort; that in good conscience he can own only what he himself has reached through painful effort; that he refuses to let himself be given anything."^[2]

Contrary to this, he points out, stands the testimony of Scripture and Christianity "that life is based on the reality of 'Grace'; that the Holy Spirit Himself is called 'Gift'; that ... the Justice of God is based on Love; that something given, something free of all debt, something undeserved, something not-achieved — is presumed in everything achieved or laid claim to; that what is first is always something received."^[3] Genuine rest, then, is a "condition of the soul" that we need to recover: "the disposition of receptive understanding."^[4]

Vita contemplativa

While Pieper's book, popular among Christians seeking to break out of the work- and consumption-centric rhythms of culture, strongly critiques modern society, his solution requires further evaluation.

For anyone who can spare the time, Pieper recommends a revival of the *vita contemplativa*, the "contemplative life," an intellectual discipline adopted by the Roman Catholic tradition from Greek thought. The heart of the contemplative life in the Christian tradition is pure contemplation of God. The steps to get there include reading, which moves one to internal meditation, then prayer, then finally this state of contemplation — an illumination by God Himself. Through this contemplative life, man leaves the merely human sphere and receives divine wisdom. Spiritual practices drawn from this understanding center on contemplation as *withdrawal*, seen, for example, in the monastic life or the contemporary prevalence of Roman Catholic "silent retreats."

There's just one problem. Even if the ultimate goal of the contemplative life is to receive from God, the process of getting there is just another thing to do, and an immensely difficult one. If this is really the way that man breaks out of the human realm and receives wisdom from God, then such wisdom depends on the very rare commodity of time. It is

impossible to work and eat and vacation and pursue one's hobbies, while also creating space and time for this meditation through which we ostensibly approach the divine. In short, the contemplative life looks radically different from the life that almost every one of us is living or could ever live. Such a contemplative life is only ever available to some.

Vita passiva

Fortunately for us, Luther critiqued the tradition of the *vita contemplativa*, in which he was raised as a monk. Substituting it with the term *vita passiva* ("the passive/receptive life"), he described the Christian life in radically receptive terms.^[5] Rather than a program of self-development, which uses God's Word as one step in elevating one's intellect until it ascends to communion with God, the passive life is receptive at every stage: It begins with a prayer to receive the Holy Spirit, then receives God through meditation on His external Word. In the *vita passiva*, "we do not make something of ourselves, God fashions and forms us."^[6]

Unlike the austere, solitary and methodical practice of the contemplative life, the *vita passiva* can be lived out in situations that look a little rougher around the edges — in fact, in any situation. For the Word who made the universe comes to us in the humblest and most common way: in words, words that can be muttered under our breath from memory in line at the grocery store, listened to on our phones on the drive to work, spoken to a suffering friend when we have no words of our own to say, read to a group of wiggling kids during some quiet two minutes of a chaotic day of vacation. These words work in us even when we do not understand them. Rather than asking us to reach Him through a contemplative ascent, God the great Giver goes even further and descends to us in a Word that remains with us no matter our circumstances.

We can trust that the Word is doing what it says. We need not seek internal marks that we are with God or at rest. In this way, compared to our culture, compared even to the advice of many Christian voices, we can radically receive; we are

fully made and formed by the Word, even if we don't see it. Even if we feel as frantic as ever.

Pieper is right that the solution to modern franticness is receptivity. But Luther's *vita passiva* shows us how generous is the Giver from whom we receive.

Eternal rest

We give thanks that we can say with David:

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 131:1–3)

This rest reflects the rest that will be ours forever in Christ. In receiving now, we both begin and anticipate what is our eternal reality and has been from the moment of creation: All we are and all we have is a gift from God. And in spite of our efforts, He will continue to give to us entirely.

This summer, whether you are blessed with a full slate of leisure or none at all, your rest can be complete, a rest which you cannot spoil with any amount of labor. Hear the Word, and live in that rest today.

Photo: LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford

[1] G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Park Ridge: Word on Fire Classics, 2017), 125.

[2] Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 1998), 19.

[3] Pieper, 20.

[4] Pieper, 30.

[5] Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 42–43.

[6] John Kleinig, "Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio: What Makes a Theologian?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (July 2002), 265.

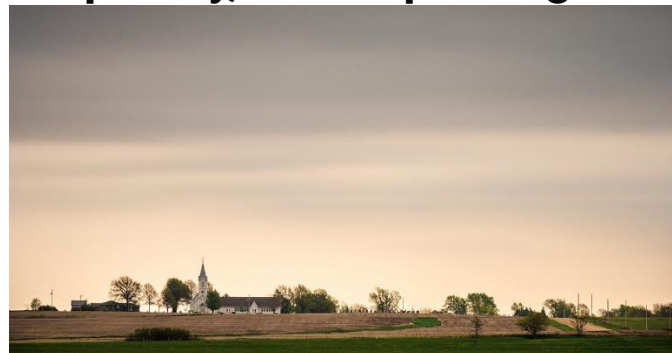


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REPORTER

Official Newspaper of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

National Mission discusses chaplaincy, church planting



St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Palmer, Kan. (LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford)

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Board for National Mission (BNM) convened June 16–17 in St. Louis to hear reports from various LCMS leaders and continue discussions on the board's work flowing from 2019 Resolution 4-04A.

Led by the Rev. Dr. David Stechholz, a member of the LCMS Board for International Mission (BIM), the BNM discussed the recent district visitations conducted by the BNM in partnership with the BIM, as called for by Res. 4-04A.

The resolution, adopted in 2019, instructs the Synod to "expand and strengthen the input with which [its] triennial mission and ministry emphases are determined." As part of this work, the BNM and BIM were directed to converse with LCMS districts and members about the Synod's triennial mission emphasis and mission priorities.

Stechholz also led the BNM in a discussion of the board's role in relation to the Synod, the Office of National Mission (ONM), the Office of the President, the BIM and other entities of corporate Synod. (The BIM held a similar discussion at its May meeting, led by BNM board member Rev. Peter Bender.)

Board member Rev. Dr. Alfonso Espinosa used his opening devotion to focus the board on the work at hand, reading through a number of passages and prescriptions from Scripture, and asking the members of the board to consider whether they fall most under the category of national or district work, or both.

The Rev. Robert Zagore, executive director of the ONM, updated the board on the ONM's recent work, including:

- Planning and exhibiting at the LCMS Youth Gathering, held July 9–13 in Houston;
- Encouraging and creating resources to support church planting across the Synod; and
- Discussing possibilities for new support models for LCMS chaplains in Specialized Pastoral Ministry in light of a recent influx of requirements to sign DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) agreements that often require them to compromise their ordination vows.

The board also heard a report on challenges and opportunities for ministry in small towns and rural areas from the Rev. Todd Kollbaum, director of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission (RSTM).

Kollbaum noted that 60% of the residents of rural areas are unchurched, providing an opportunity for outreach in those communities. He also described a multitude of congregational partnership models that can help congregations in these areas “continue vibrant Word and Sacrament ministry,” and discussed resources that RSTM is putting together to help congregations discern which model might work well for them and to implement it.

The Rev. Dr. David Loy, professor of Philosophy, Theology and Ethics at Concordia University Irvine, Irvine, Calif., presented to the board on “Responding as a Christian to Contemporary Ideologies,” and Zagore reported on the purpose and work of the Specialized Pastoral Ministry program.

The board will hold its next meeting Oct. 13–14 in St. Louis.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter Article – August 2022

The Ceremony of the Offertory

Have you ever noticed the subtle ceremony involved in receiving the offerings during the Divine Service? After all the offerings have been collected, they are brought forward and given to the pastor or one of his assistants. The pastor then turns toward the altar, and as he slightly bows his head, the collection plates with the offerings in them are raised slightly to the Lord and then placed either on the altar or a table for the offerings. Why do we do have this ceremony? And what does it teach us? For that is what ceremony does; it teaches, as the Augsburg Confession tells us, what we need to know about Christ (AC XXIV, 1–3).

Originally, this ceremony included more than simply bringing forward what was collected in the offering plates. The elements for the Holy Communion—the bread and the wine—were brought forward along with the offering plates. As the offering plates and the elements were lifted toward the Lord, and placed upon the altar, the elements would be put in the center and the altar, now made a table, would be set for the Lord's Supper.

These gifts brought to the altar came from the sweat of the people's brow. It is the bread and wine, the fruits of the peoples' labor in this fallen world. After six days of labor and toil, the people would bring a generous proportion for the Lord's work. It was set upon the altar and offered to the Lord for Him to take up and press into His service for His gracious work in and among them.

For what they offered to the Lord from the sweat of their brow, the bread of anxious toil, came back to them as the bread of life, the bread come down from heaven that whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup would receive life through

the forgiveness of their sins.

This is not unlike what the Lord did for His people in the Old Testament:

You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household.

What a blessing! God provides for us in all things. He provides bread from the sweat of our brows, and He receives this from us in the first fruits offerings we give to Him in thanksgiving and praise. He receives and turns it into spiritual bread, heavenly bread, the bread of eternal life and gives it back to us so that we might have joy. So, the next time you are in the Divine Service, watch this ceremony in wonder, that the Lord gives back to us, what we have given to Him so that we may rejoice in the salvation He has won upon the cross and gives to us in His supper.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry:
lcms.org/stewardship

Save the date!

#GIVEGREENANDGOLD

#GiveGreenandGold Day is Sept. 26!



Komba Project Nears Completion



“If the New Testament had not been translated into our language, people would still say that Christianity is for white people,” explained one young man. “Now we can hear and read and understand God’s Word in Komba.”

The Komba team will complete the translation process of the full Bible within the next two years. The next step is the printing process!

Join the 500th anniversary celebration of Martin Luther’s New Testament translation into the vernacular German. Partner with the Komba language community to put God’s Word in their hands.

Give today!



**PUT GOD’S WORD
IN THEIR HANDS**

go.LBT.org

August 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Altar Guild: Dean & Jan Bergelin	1	2	3	4	5 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	6
7 9th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service	8	9	10	11	12 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	13
14 10th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC)	15	16	17	18 6:30p Elders Mtg 7:00p Council Mtg	19 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	20
21 11th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service	22 <i>Newsletter Articles Due</i>	23	24 7:00p Joint Committee Mtg @ St. Peter	25	26 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	27
28 12th Sunday after Pentecost <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC)	29	30	31			

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion