

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Newsletter

July - August 2017
104 West Main Street, Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we prepare to celebrate this year the 500th anniversary of the reformation, I'd like to share with you (in two parts, this newsletter and the next) a piece written by Pastor Paul Hinlicky, formerly the Slovak Zion Synod's missionary in Slovakia. The article is forthcoming in its entirety in the next issue of "The Christian Century." Many people are taking the occasion of this anniversary to ask anew, "What does it mean to be a Lutheran?" We'll be discussing this theme at our evening bible studies this summer and I encourage you to read the following article to prepare for some interesting and fruitful conversation about our faith! Bring your questions!

Peace and Joy,
Pastor Tom

“What would it mean for mainline Protestants to understand and appropriate the message of Luther’s 95 Theses? For all the ballyhoo over the centuries, I have come to wonder whether the message has ever been heard, understood, and appropriated. It would not mean, I venture, a booster shot for habitual anti-Catholicism, nor would it remotely endorse “cheap grace” as the remedy for ecclesiastical profiteering.

Hearing and understanding the Theses in their original sense, I propose, would entail a willingness to be shaped by the cross of Christ, as expressed in Luther’s opening statement: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ [Matt. 4:17], he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” The Theses applied Luther’s theology of the cross (which he was developing at the same time) to the business of religion in his day. True penitents, Luther argued, welcome the cross laid upon them by God because it conforms them to Christ and so prepares them for heaven.

Luther was familiar with canon law, which had distinguished the guilt of sin from the punishment of sin. Guilt ruins the relationship of Creator and creature so that God alone can (and does) restore the relationship by the grace of forgiveness through the merits of Christ obedient to death, even death on a cross. The punishments of sin, which may be human and civil, ecclesiastical as well as divine, were understood to restore balance to the moral order that has been violated by injustice and incurred wrath. The satisfaction of wrath is provided for by punishment, which restores equilibrium to the system thrown into disorder by injustice. Like the thief on the cross, who is forgiven but not spared, forgiveness of guilt and pardon from punishment were seen as distinct notions.

Today, however, we are uncomfortable with the very ideas of guilt and punishment, not to mention wrath and satisfaction. There are good reasons for this discomfort, including the inequities of our systems of justice and the tyrannies of our petty moralisms. There are also bad reasons for it, including the loss of personal agency and responsibility in our culture. Religiously, we are tempted to sweep the old canonical distinction away and endorse what Heinrich Heine satirized, “Of course God will forgive me—that is His job!” But we should consider here Nietzsche’s acerbic observation that “to forgive all is to *despise* all!”

Surprisingly, for Luther divine punishment is for our good. It may be understood as reparative rather than retributive when endured in solidarity with Christ, whose sacrifice once and for all satisfied retributive justice at the cost not of the offender but of the offended. For the believer, consequently, genuine and divine punishment *is* the cross of Christ, which not only forgives the guilt of sin to restore the relationship but is also then laid on the forgiven ones for their *true* good: the Pauline wasting away of the old outer nature like the cocoon from which the new life of the butterfly will someday emerge. Luther’s true Christian penitent, sorry for sin but not for sin’s punishment, gets to die with Christ so that out of these ruins the Holy Spirit brings newness of life by the purification of desire.

Try selling that on the religious marketplace, then or now!

Modern readers are surprised by the 95 Theses’ emphasis on penalties and cross-bearing.

But getting us *out* of the religious marketplace was exactly Luther's point. Luther's analysis reduced the practice of buying and selling indulgences to virtual absurdity. Since true penitents welcome the cross that God lays upon them as divinely given for their ongoing purification, indulgences are nothing but concessions to the nominal Christians—"sluggards," Luther called them—who fear punishment but not sin. Such indulgences are demeritorious. They are works of the religion business, not the business of the kingdom of God.

Luther's Theses put the indulgence merchants on the horns of a dilemma. If the pope had the power to purchase release from divine retribution by substituting the surplus merit of the saints to satisfy the penitent's debt to divine justice, and if divine punishment is as cruel and fearsome as the indulgence merchants claimed, surely the Holy Father would empty purgatory for free rather than for filthy lucre! At the same time, the indulgence preachers' emphasis on escaping punishment obscured the significance of Christ's cross as a reparative form of punishment. True preaching should not magnify punishment to make auditors fear it; rather, it should magnify sin to make penitents hate it.

Why indeed then would anyone wish to short-circuit the purgation of their wayward desires through Christ, in holy preparation for eternal life with God? If purgatory means the purification of the Christian, beginning in this lifetime, then the message of Luther's 95 Theses might well be stated: *Let purgatory begin in this life! Purgatory now! Purgatory without delay!*

In his little book on the 95 Theses, Timothy Wengert tells of a contemporary layperson who, upon reading the 95 Theses, commented that "they aren't very Lutheran!" It may equally be the case that today's Lutherans are not very Lutheran. Indeed, this revealing remark reflects a double truth.

First, it reflects the truth that Luther, when he wrote the Theses, had not yet realized all the implications of his doctrine of justification by faith. He had yet to discover how faith is certain because it moves the believer out of self-preoccupation and into trusting God and regarding the neighbor in love. The 95 Theses primarily attack the false security that is placed in one's own pious works, including the "childish" work of buying salvation in the form of indulgences—bribes, really. The certainty of faith that can rest in God's grace as delivered in Christ is not yet fully accented in the Theses, although in hindsight we can detect intimations of it in the thesis about the "true treasure of the church, which is the gospel of the glory and grace of God."

Most contemporary readers of the 95 Theses live in a Protestantism that, in H. Richard Niebuhr's famous caricature, "teaches a God without wrath who brings men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." Such readers can indeed be taken aback by the Theses' emphasis on penalties and the cross. But for Luther, as we have heard, these pains are divinely given aids to be welcomed by the pilgrim disciples on their arduous journey of purification on the narrow way to heaven.

Pastoral Care

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1334
Office Phone-860-684-7571

Church – htlc-church@att.net

Website – htlcstafford.org

Pastor Thomas-860-806-2440

Members of the Council are:

Rev. Thomas S. Drobená

President – Andrew Fisher

Vice-President – Walter Kovaciny

Treasurer – Catherine Lichanec

Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe

Melissa Fisher

Leonard Lichanec

Michael Marvonek

Patricia Marvonek

(Non-Council position)

Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

Service Teams

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa

† Property Team: Andrew Fisher,
Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and
Michael Welch

† Learning & Youth Group Team:
Rev. Thomas Drobená, Melissa Fisher,
Walter Kovaciny, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

Shut-in Members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Attn: Mr. Harold Barton
Fox Hill Center
1253 Hartford Tpke. Room #49A
Vernon, CT 06066-4560

Attn: Mrs. Barbara Bulick
Brookdale
1715 Ellington Rd. Room # 212
South Windsor, CT 06074-2702

Ms. Shirley Kaba
7 High St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1215

Attn: Ms. Barbara Kovaciny
Evergreen Health Care Center
205 Chestnut Hill Rd., Room # 1101
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Mr. Paul C. Kovaciny
242 East St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3923

Ms. Anna Mandak
21 Old Monson Rd.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343

Mrs. Tonia Marvonek
Evergreen Health Care Center
201 Chestnut Hill Rd., Rm. # 2107
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Birth Announcement

Adam and Cassie Tremblay are proud to announce the birth of their son, Soren. Soren was born on Saturday, May 6th weighing 8 lbs. 7 oz. Caleb loves being a big brother! Grandparents Bryan and Leigh Maxa are happy as well with the addition to the family.

July Birthdays

06 – Jillian Verney
08 – Anna Mandak
15 – Bill Mottes
20 – Carl John ‘Jack’ Mercier
20 – Janet Renn
21 – Catherine Hoss
21 – Jamie Murray
22 – Richard Palacko
23 – Melanie Mordasky

July Anniversaries

07 – Rob & Dawn Titus
08 – Ryan & Jessica Cooley
26 – Derek & Sarah Bauer
28 – Michael & Patricia Marvonek

August Birthdays

05 – Madeleine Mercier
07 – Adam Tremblay
14 – Rob Titus
17 – John Fittz
17 – Kenneth VanDyk
18 – Brittaney Titus
23 – Cynthia Brown
27 – Judy Titus
28 – Alex Hoss
29 – Patricia O'Brien
29 – Claudia Sevcik

Anniversaries

15 – John & Joan Fittz
21 – Donald & Barbara Hoffman
Happy 60th Anniversary

Harvest Sale

The tentative date for this year's Harvest Sale will be Saturday, October 14, 2017 per Leigh Maxa.

Thanks to... Bob and Judy Titus for mowing the church lawn on Friday, June 9, 2017.

You did an excellent job and the mowing was appreciated.

Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candle

The cost of the church flowers will be about \$20.00. Give Pat the money, she will pick them up.

The payment for the Sanctuary candle is still \$5.00.

Thanks to everyone for being willing to work with these changes.



July Service Schedule

These readings are from Series A and can be found in the front of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal.

Tellers

Ushers

Worships Assistants

Reader

July 2, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Jeremiah 28: 5 – 9; Psalm 89: 1 – 4, 15 – 18; Romans 6: 12 – 23; Matthew 10: 40 – 42

Amelia Hinchliffe

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Pat Marvonek

July 9, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

Zechariah 9: 9 – 12; Psalm 145: 8 – 14; Romans 7: 15 – 25a; Matthew 11: 16 – 19, 25 – 30

Michael Welch

Walter Kovaciny

Sheila Welch

Daniel Lichanec

Sheila Welch

Cathy Lichanec

July 16, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Isaiah 55: 10 – 13; Psalm 65: [1 – 8] 9 – 13; Romans 8: 1 – 11; Matthew 13: 1 – 9, 18 – 23

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Cathy Lichanec

Steve Marvonek

Leonard Lichanec Leonard Lichanec

July 23, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Wisdom 12: 13, 16 – 19; Psalm 86: 11 – 17; Romans 8: 12 – 25; Matthew 13: 24 – 30, 36 – 43

Melissa Fisher

Rick Bednar

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Walter Kovaciny Walter Kovaciny

July 30, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

1 Kings 3: 5 – 12; Psalm 119: 129 – 136; Romans 8: 26 – 39; Matthew 13: 31 – 33, 44 – 52

Amelia Hinchliffe

Rick Bednar

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Walter Kovaciny

Attention all Lay Assistants and Volunteers that help with services

This includes Council Members, (Tellers), Ushers, Worship Assistants and Readers.

Please let me know dates and days of when you aren't available to serve in your position. It's much easier to find a replacement (when available) prior to typing the Monthly Service Schedule rather than finding a replacement after the schedule is typed or you just don't show up. You can hand me a piece of paper when we see each other at church; or send me an email at walterkovaciny@cox.net or send me the information via snail mail.

August – September Service Schedule

These readings are from Series A and can be found in the front of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal.

Tellers

Ushers

Worship Assistants

Reader

August 6, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Isaiah 55: 1 – 5; Psalm 145: 8 – 9, 14 – 21; Romans 9: 1 – 5; Matthew 14: 13 – 21

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Amelia Hinchliffe | Walter Kovaciny | Leigh Maxa | Daniel Lichanec |
| Michael Marvonek | Pat Marvonek | | |

August 13, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

1 Kings 19: 9 – 18; Psalm 85: 8 – 13; Romans 10: 5 – 15; Matthew 14: 22 – 33

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|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Michael Welch | Walter Kovaciny | Sheila Welch | Daniel Lichanec |
| Sheila Welch | Cathy Lichanec | | |

August 20, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Isaiah 56: 1, 6 – 8; Psalm 67; Romans 11: 1 – 2a, 29 – 32; Matthew 15: [10 – 20] 21 – 28

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|-------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Leonard Lichanec | Daniel Lichanec | Cathy Lichanec | Steve Marvonek |
| Patricia Marvonek | Leonard Lichanec | | |

August 27, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

Isaiah 51: 1 – 6; Psalm 138; Romans 12: 1 – 8; Matthew 16: 13 – 20

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|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Melissa Fisher | Rick Bednar | Cathy Lichanec | Michael Welch |
| Walter Kovaciny | Walter Kovaciny | | |

September 3, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

Jeremiah 15: 15 – 21; Psalm 26; 1 – 8; Romans 12: 9 – 21; Matthew 16: 21 – 28

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|-------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Amelia Hinchliffe | Walter Kovaciny | Leigh Maxa | Daniel Lichanec |
| Michael Marvonek | Pat Marvonek | | |

July *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion and 1 st Communion 11:15 a.m. Social Hour 11:15 a.m. Learning Committee | 3 Thomas, Apostle | 4 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 5 Cyril & Methodius, Missionaries 7:30 p.m. Vespers and Bible Study | 6 John Hus, Martyr | 7 | 8 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution |
| 9 The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion | 10 | 11 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:20 a.m. Social Hour | 17 Ruth, Matriarch | 18 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 19 7:30 p.m. Bible Study | 20 | 21 | 22 Mary Magdalene, Apostle 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution |
| 23 The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion | 24 | 25 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 Mary, Martha, & Lazarus |
| 30 The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion | 31 Joseph of Arimathea | | | | | |

August *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | 1 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 2 7:30 p.m. Bible Study | 3 Joanna, Mary, & Salome | 4 | 5 |
| 6 The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Learning & Youth Committee meeting 11:20 a.m. Social Hour | 7 | 8 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 9 | 10 Lawrence, Deacon | 11 | 12 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution |
| 13 The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion | 14 Deadline for submitting articles / information for the September newsletter | 15 Mary, Mother of our Lord 7 p.m. Holy Communion | 16 7:30 p.m. Bible Study | 17 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 18 | 19 |
| 20 The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:20 a.m. Social Hour | 21 | 22 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 23 | 24 Bartholomew, Apostle 7 p.m. Vespers | 25 | 26 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution |
| 27 The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion | 28 | 29 <i>Pastor's Day off</i> | 30 | 31 | | |

***** Coming Events *****

July

2 – Tyler Murray receiving First Communion – 10:00 a.m.

2 & 16 – Social Hour – 11:20 a.m.

5 – Vespers – 7:30 p.m.

5 & 19 – Bible Study – 7:30 p.m.

August

2 & 16 – Bible Study – 7:30 p.m.

6 & 20 – Social Hour – 11:20 a.m.

15 – Mary, Mother of our Lord, Holy Communion – 7:00 – p.m.

24 – Bartholomew, Apostle, Vespers – 7:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 104 West Main St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Web site address www.holytrinitystafford.org

Address Correction Requested Slovak Zion Synod – ELCA

