



JULY/AUGUST 2019



St. John's Lutheran Church
Burt, Iowa 50522
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He remembers his **Testament** forever,
the **Word** he appointed for a thousand generations
Psalm 105:8(JP)

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Pastor
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‘Telling the good News about Jesus-In Burt, Iowa, and the World’



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at St. John's,

For the past couple months we've been praying a prayer on Sunday morning which has generated some discussion among us. The prayer goes like this:

For all the Christians of Kossuth and surrounding counties, O One True God, especially those from [*a rotating list of names of area congregations is inserted here*]; We pray that You who restores to the right way those who err, who gathers those who are scattered, and who preserves those who are gathered, would of Your great mercy pour upon Your people the gift of unity through your eternal and unchangeable Word that, all schisms being healed, we might serve You in oneness of heart and confession. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

The underlying curiosity has been simply: why? Why are we praying for Christian congregations who believe differently than we do? Additionally, what are we confessing about these congregations by praying such a prayer? Finally, is it appropriate for us to be praying in this way?

The first and primary reason why we are praying for Christians outside our confessional Lutheran faith is because Holy Scripture asks us to do so. St. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:1-6:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Therefore we pray for these congregations because they are filled with people in need of prayer, just as all people are in need of prayer. We also believe that God will hear our prayer on their behalf through the mediation of Christ and will answer it. This alone is reason enough to pray for all people in all circumstances.

The content of our prayer for these congregations of different Christian denominations also says something about what we believe about them. The fact that we pray for them at all indicates that we love these people and desire for God to work good in their lives. Notice also that we identify

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these congregations as consisting of Christian people, which means that we are praying for people who we believe have faith in the Triune God, have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus on the cross, and who will live with God and all believers into eternal life. Our prayer communicates that we desire to be fully united with all Christians in the faith of our heart and the faith of our confession, but that we currently do not share a full fellowship because of our differences of belief. Most importantly, our prayer reminds us that it is the truth of God's eternal and unchangeable Word that unites His Church as one. Therefore the unity that we are praying for is not a unity of traditions or styles or governing structures, but a unity of faith in God's Word.

Keeping in mind why we pray for these congregations and what exactly we are praying for, we can see that this is a prayer we ought to pray boldly and confidently. In fact it would be inappropriate not to pray for the truth of the Word to prevail among these congregations. Surely there is hardly a greater act of love toward our Christian brothers and sisters than to pray that God bless them with the same amount of clarity and understanding of His Word that we believe we possess. Rather than despising our fellow Christians or ignoring our divisions, this prayer that we pray is an act of love and an important step toward the unity that God desires for His people.

It is my hope as we continue to pray this prayer in the months to come that God would hear our prayer and work to unite us all under one confession of Him. It is also my hope that as we pray this prayer together you might be inspired to become active in seeking out unity among God's holy Church on earth. You can do this by telling your friends from other denominations that we are praying for them. Explain to them why we are praying for them: because we love them and don't want any harm to come to them from believing wrongly about God and His salvation. You can also work to correct their errors of doctrine with the truth in a loving way. This may require you to do a little brushing up on your Small Catechism, but you'll find as an LCMS Christian that you are much more prepared to defend the true faith than you might think. You can also seek unity among your fellow Christians by joining with them for activities that don't compromise our confession of faith – things like showing mercy in Christ's name to our community and to those in need. For instance, look out in the coming months as we explore new opportunities to come together with our friends at Burt Presbyterian to show God's love to our town and surrounding area.

As you do pursue unity in the Church keep in mind that the Christian Church on earth will likely suffer division until our Lord's return. Take heart, however, with the knowledge that we will surely see in full the answer to our prayer for unity in the Church Triumphant of the new heavens and new earth.

God bless you this summer and always!

Yours in Christ,



Pastor Thomas Cowell
The Season of Pentecost, 2019

A changeless Christ for a changing world:
A look back at our *Parish Messenger* from August, 1931.

[The following article from a source titled *Exchange* was published in the August, 1931 edition of the *Parish Messenger* of St. John's Lutheran Church.]

Summer Christianity

The blessed Savior told His disciples: "Come ye yourselves apart in a desert and rest awhile." An authority on such matters states: "Thousands of the best brains and hearts of the pulpit, the bar, and the medical office, as well as important departments of life, have simply killed themselves in their best manhood and womanhood because they would not obey Christ's command and take a rest." Especially when the summer heat is upon us a vacation or a day of rest now and then, is essential to the well-being of every diligent worker.

But even as man abuses every good ordinance of God, so it is with vacations and days of rest. And even Christians are not guiltless in this respect. It is sad, but true, that many churches have taken the "summer slump" for granted, to the extent that some churches are closed, while others reduce activities to a minimum. A church had this inscription on its bulletin board, "This is the gate of heaven," and underneath a sign was tacked, reading, "Closed during July and August." Time and again have we heard pastors complain about the discouraging slump in attendance during the summer.

Are we guilty? Compare church attendance during June, July, and August with the attendance during any other three months, and you will find that it is considerably lower. You present an argument: In summer we visit friends and relatives in other places and go to church there. We ask: How many of you really did that? And how often? Furthermore do not these friends and relatives visit you during the summer? And should not their attendance in our church make up for those who happen to worship in other churches? No, that does not explain the summer slump. The reason lies much deeper.

The reason lies chiefly in the utter disregard of Christ's word: "Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God, etc." The body must be cared for, but the soul is neglected. Friends must be visited, but the "Friend of Souls" can wait until you are good and ready to commune with Him. You must rest from work, but the need of resting in Jesus and His Almighty word is forgotten. The joys and pleasures of summer must be taken in, and so you deprive yourselves of the "Joy in the Lord" which time and circumstances cannot efface.

About a year ago a great drought and heat wave struck our country. Did you seek the Lord's face in His temple to implore Him for the forgiveness of your sins and for help in time of need? Oh no, you had to go visiting, to outings and picnics. You grumbled and groaned because of the weather. But you gave little thought to Him who sent the drought as a chastening, and who could so easily and quickly bring relief.

This year you moan about the "depression"; and complain that too much is asked of you for church purposes. But did you ever consider that your trips and outings cost decidedly more than even the envelope collections? And how do you expect the Lord to turn away your afflictions as long as you do not repent of your ingratitude and indifference;

and as long as you selfishly seek your own advantages, while you try to hold up the progress of God's kingdom?

Friends, take a vacation; take a day off! But remember that also "days off" belong to God. Then they will not become harmful to your soul and your support of God's church. Much rather will they refresh you in body and mind so that you will attend with renewed vigor to "your Father's business." Rest awhile not for selfish reasons, but in order to be able to render better service in the kingdom of God.

[The following are announcements taken from the August, 1931 edition of the *Parish Messenger*.]

- Our Lutheran Missouri Synod has 2,942 preachers in active service, serving 4,633 congregations and 1,137,793 souls and 715,067 communicants. Total value of church property is \$120,327,795.00
- Our Lutheran Missouri Synod owns seven seminaries and twelve colleges, worth \$10,000,000. 178 professors train 2,855 young men to preach and teach the glorious Gospel.
- The church floor certainly looks fine since it was revarnished. The Powers Brothers did the work, and did it very efficiently. Now let every one be very careful so that the floor will retain its present luster for a long time. As to financing this job it was suggested that every member contribute the sum of \$5.00, or as much as he feels able to pay.
- It was our great pleasure to receive into communicant membership Mrs. R. C. Koestler who, after due instruction was baptized and confirmed in church Sunday July 5th. We wish her God's choicest blessing and hope that she will ever be a faithful member of Christ's Holy Church.
- The Walther League plans to have a wiener roast at Call's Park in Algona Tuesday evening, Aug. 11. Is it necessary to URGE all society members to be there? Let us all go. And then, don't forget the next regular League meeting on Monday evening, Aug. 17.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

2- Bailey Marlow
3 - Kali Karels
3 - Justin Schuller
4 - Irene Miller
6 - John Cherland
6 - Joel Smith
6 - Debra Steven
7 - Michael Person
9 - Caradene Parsons
11 - Jordan Blocker
12 - Kristin Faber
12 - Patricia Lavrenz
12 - Craig Steven
13 - Del Reutzel
15 - Pat Eimers
20 - Barb Meyer
20 - Halie Reimers
22 - Marcia Hanna
22 - Kenna Rae Hatten
22 - Jeff Schutjer
24 - Alex Feuring
24 - Melvin Haase
24 - Wilma Smith
27 - Alexandra Gifford
28 - Lindsay Storvik
29 - Joseph Heyes
31 - Janice Schaeller

13 - Chris Heyes
14 - Stan Eimers
14 - Linda Huber
14 - Linda Kerkove
14 - Mary Schmidt
15 - Mary Steven
16 - Stacey Myers
19 - Pam Crosser
20 - Denise Shipler
21 - Randy Reimers
23 - JoHanna Boyle
23 - Micah Lavrenz
23 - Vickie Madsen
23 - Kendra Ridenour
25 - Rachel Feuring
25 - Vernal Koestler
25 - Merlin Madsen
26 - Sylvia Loken
26 - Ryder Parsons
27 - Alexandra Faith Gifford
28 - Connie Aaron
28 - Doris Nutt Gifford
29 - Nick Symonds
30 - Michelle Feuring
31 - Marvin Heidecker
31 - Linda Peter



Special Seniors

Caradene Parsons - July 9
Pat Eimers - July 15
Barb Meyer - July 20
Melvin Haase - July 24
Wilma Smith - July 24
Janice Schaeller - July 31
Vernal Koestler - August - 25
Doris Nutt Gifford - August 28

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

1 - Wade Briggs
1 - Corey Shipler
4 - Esther Lavrenz
5 - Penny Cowell
8 - Joseph Culbertson
9 - Tessa Schmidt
10 - Paul Jahnke
11 - Brandon Koestler



Peaceful Release
Irene Miller
 May 10, 2019

**Kids Of the Kingdom
 Preschool
 Burt Summer Celebration
 Cobbler and Ice Cream Social**
When: July 13, during the noon
 meal
Where: Burt Activity Complex

Please come and celebrate with us 19 years
 of providing a christian preschool to so
 many children!

**A Thank you from Kids of the
 Kingdom Preschool Board**

Kids of the Kingdom Preschool Board has
 had to make the difficult decision to close
 the preschool . We have dealt with
 declining enrollment for the past several
 years and after a one year hiatus last year,
 we were unable to enroll enough students
 for the coming year. We want to thank the
 congregation for their generous support
 over the years. We couldn't have done it
 without you!

St. John's LWML

St. John's LWML met May 2, at 1:30.
 Caradene Parsons gave devotions, 'Consider
 the Lilies – how they grow' ,Luke 12:27.

The Bible study from the quarterly was
 'Nameless women of the Bible', Luke
 11:27-28.

Roll call was answered by 4 members. The
 secretary and treasurers reports were given.

Bev Skadburg gave a report on the Spring
 Zone Rally at Luverne.

Motion carried to give \$25.00 to the
 missionary offering – Lutheran Bible
 translators.

Confirmation gowns will be furnished for the
 4 confirmands on May 5th. Also confirmation
 quilts.

The Okoboji Quilt Auction is June 15th.
 Motion carried to donate \$100.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer
 and the Table Prayer.

Mary Gifford was hostess.

St John's LWML met June 6 at 1:30.
 Janice Schaeffer gave devotions –'Let us Love
 one another – John 4:7.'

Pastor Cowell gave the bible study, ' Brief
 counsel for the suffering and afflicted', by
 Pastor Wilhem Loehe. 15 steps for comfort
 and guidance.

Roll call was answered by 6 members and
 pastor.

The secretary and treasurers reports were
 given.

The International LWML Convention in
 Mobile, AL is June 20-23.

Motion carried to send \$25 for mission
 projects.

Camp Okoboji Quilt Auction is June 15.

There is no meeting in July. August is Ladies
 Day out.

The birthday song was sung for Mary Lou
 Marlow.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's
 Prayer and table prayer.

Mary Lou Marlow was the hostess.

Caradene Parsons, secretary