

## Trinity Lutheran Church

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April 2010

### Pastor's Ponderings



Dear Christian friends;

“Why is the baptismal font in the front of the church?” In many churches that question would never come up. No one thinks about it because the baptismal font has always been front and center. But at Trinity, it is something new and different. For many years the only time the baptismal font was out front and center was on the days when we had a baptism. And then as soon as the baptism was over (often even during the service), it was tucked back safely out of the way. And so, when the baptismal font made its way out front, a number of you just assumed the first few weeks we were blessed to be having another baptism. But now, it's been out there for a while, and some of you have become curious (and/or courageous?) enough to ask, “Why is the baptismal font in the front of the church?”

Before I begin trying to explain, let me first say there is no dogmatic reason why a baptismal font **must** be in the front of the church. I know of no scriptural passages that even speak of the necessity of a baptismal font, much less where one should be placed. But that does not mean there is no appropriate or inappropriate place, either. Just as the placement of the altar and pulpit (or their absence) in a sanctuary confess or teach something about our worship, so does the placement of the baptismal font.

In his essay, *The Setting of the Liturgy and Decorum of Its Leaders: The Place of Worship*, Wayne E. Schmidt explains the symbolism of the design and location of the baptismal font within the church sanctuary.

The baptismal font joins the pulpit and the altar as the third major liturgical furnishing in a Lutheran church. Both the location of the font and its design have been the subject of much discussion in recent times, not only among Lutherans but within other communions of western Christendom as well. That Baptism is a major event in the life of any Christian is not a subject for debate, for it is evident from the New Testament that Baptism is Christianity's entrance rite. The Pentecost throngs, cut to the heart by the sermon of Peter inquired earnestly, “What shall we do?” Peter's answer was, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38 RSV). The distraught jailer of Philippi, having been taught the word of the Lord, was baptized together with his instructed household (Acts 16:32-33). Christ Himself commanded Baptism and in His conversation with Nicodemus confirmed that entry into the kingdom of God requires being born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Charged to baptize, Christian communities have made provision in their church buildings for the rite of Holy Baptism.

Lutheran churches have generally had modest baptismal fonts suitable for sprinkling or pouring water and located in the vicinity of the chancel. The location of the font in the front of the church where pulpit and altar are situated calls attention to Baptism as a means of grace together with the Gospel and the Sacrament of the Altar. Although the font is usually small in comparison with the pulpit and the altar, the font's position in the front of the congregation is a regular reminder of Baptism and permits the congregation to witness baptisms.

It must be admitted, however, that Lutheran sensitivity to the significance of the font may need sharpening. The small size of this liturgical furnishing has made it an easily movable piece of furniture. If space is needed in the front of the church for a Christmas tree or some other purpose, for example, there is usually little hesitation about relocating the baptismal font or even removing it completely from congregational view. Such cavalier treatment of the baptismal font causes it to lose its symbolic value and gives the impression that it is a piece of furniture of no more significance than a folding chair. Since fonts are frequently not too large, some have questioned whether smallness in itself has diminished the effectiveness of the font as a theological symbol. Symbols, admittedly, do not have to be large to be meaningful, but when the font of regeneration joins and imposes pulpit and altar for a symbolic message, the font's design should be such that it assures that the liturgical place and symbol for baptism does not fade into the woodwork.

Fonts have not always had casual treatment. Larger and more elaborate fonts have been used in the past, and in some periods of history fonts were located in separate baptisteries. Contemporary suggestions for giving more visible testimony to the importance of Baptism as Christianity's entrance rite have included several ideas—for example, that the font be placed at the entrance to the nave so that worshipers have a striking reminder of baptism when they enter and leave the worship setting. The placement is not new, having been employed already in medieval times. The arrangement, however, is not without some problems. First, pews must be very carefully arranged so that the assembly may comfortably turn to witness the baptisms. Secondly, the congregation loses the advantage, when gathered for worship, of having all three major pieces of liturgical furniture in view simultaneously.

Another proposal is to construct large-scale basins that hold water permanently. Fonts of this type may stand quite alone at either the front or the back of the church and by their separateness be readily identified as the place for Baptism. Some have even suggested that a larger receptacle of water for baptismal use could double as a decorative fountain within the building. One questions, however, whether that makes an effective statement about Baptism. Decorative fountains abound in buildings of all sorts. To have a baptismal font that blends into the general décor makes the font a rather empty symbol. Modern proposals to improve and enhance the significance of baptismal fonts in Lutheran churches deserve attention but need to be examined with a critical eye to make sure that suggested changes in design or placement are genuine improvements and not just passing fads.

Options on matters of this sort will vary, but there should really be no argument about the importance of the baptismal font in the Lutheran worship setting. Baptism unites us with Christ, as Paul says in Gal. 3:27. It is a means of grace, for it is the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). This suggests that the baptismal font and baptismal space in churches should be prominent, adequate, and clearly defined. It is consistent with Lutheran theology to have the baptismal font join altar and pulpit as an architectural focal point inside a Lutheran church.<sup>1</sup>

Like many things in our worship practices and theology, church architecture and furnishing can be misunderstood. There is certainly a danger of placing too much emphasis on its symbolism and turn these articles intended to enhance our worship and give our worship the proper focus on the gifts of God's grace given for the sake of Christ into idols and relics. But we must also be careful not to too casually

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<sup>1</sup> Fred L. Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), pp. 209-211.

dismiss centuries old traditions and practices that have properly proclaimed Christ crucified for the forgiveness of our sins. Who would think that something about the location of the baptismal font could have anything to say other than reveal personal preference or convenience?

While there are many factors that enter into the placing of the baptismal font, I believe there is an especially good reason for it to be front and center—so we don't forget it! So that we continuously remember our baptism in our worship, just as we are encouraged to recall our baptism daily through contrition and repentance. A font up front and center helps to remind me each time that I hear the Invocation at the beginning of the service that the only reason I am able to come into God's presence in worship is because He has given me His holy name in baptism. A font up front and center reminds me that the absolution I hear is done in the same name that was placed upon me in my baptism—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A font up front and center reminds me each time I pass it on the way to the Sacrament of the Altar, the only reason I have a place at the Lord's Table is because I have been adopted into His family through baptism. A font up front and center reminds me that our prayers are heard for Christ's sake as we speak them in the triune name of God. A font up front and center reminds me as I leave the worship service I am going out into a cold, hard world in which Satan, the world, and my old sinful nature seek my destruction, but in my baptism I am protected by God's name and sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

I hope this helps to answer the question: "Why is the baptismal font up front?" But more than that I appreciate the opportunity that we have to discuss baptism and its important place in our daily life. May we continue to grow in our baptismal grace each and every day.

In Christ!

*Pastor Moeller*

### **When You Pray, Say...**



The theme for our midweek Lenten and holy week services this year is "**When You Pray, Say...**" Through readings of the passion narrative, hymns on prayer and Lenten hymns, and sermons we will focus upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> chief part of Luther's Small Catechism—The Lord's Prayer. You might be thinking, "The Lord's Prayer for Lent... that seems strange. What does the Lord's Prayer have to do with Lent?" Historically Lent has been a time of intense catechesis (teaching the basic doctrines of the Christian faith). Lent is a time of repentance and somber reflection. That makes the focus on the teachings of the Lord's Prayer the Small Catechism especially appropriate.

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of repentance. It turns us away from ourselves and toward our heavenly Father. It reminds of the many things He provides to us out of His fatherly, divine goodness, and mercy each and every day. We are especially reminded of the one thing we really need from God—His forgiveness. We are all wayward children. We have failed to trust in God as our loving Father. We have failed to keep God's name holy among us in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We have lived as though we were not part of God's kingdom. We have failed to realize God's provision of our daily bread or always received it with thanksgiving. We have fallen into temptation and been overcome by the evil one. But God is a faithful Father. And so we pray, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Please join us each Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. as we explore all of the blessings that God bestows upon us as our Lord teaches us to pray. For your convenience, various groups of the church will be serving meals from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. each week.

### **Schedule of services during Holy Week**

Maundy Thursday ~ April 1<sup>st</sup>

Good Friday w/communion ~ April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Easter Sunrise w/communion ~ April 4<sup>th</sup> ~ 6:30 a.m.

Easter w/communion ~ April 4<sup>th</sup> ~ 9:30 a.m.

## Individual Confession & Absolution

With the historic Church, we maintain the practice of offering Individual Confession & Absolution. Each month in the newsletter, times when Pastor will be in his office to hear your confession and give you God's absolution. Otherwise you may make an appointment. You may look at the rite of Individual Absolution in *Luther's Small Catechism* in preparation.

## Main Street Living



Main Street Living's mission is to produce a quality Christian program, which brings the message of Jesus Christ to homebound individuals. It is supported entirely by the churches of the area and its viewers. Please continue to remember this mission in your prayers and in your giving. Mailing address is Main Street Living, 1400 S. Duluth Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57105.

Main Street Living may be seen Sundays on KDLT-NBC. The first portion is a children's program, *Kid's Crossing*, which airs between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. The second portion is a worship service led by area LC-MS pastor. You may also watch this program at [www.mainstreetliving.com](http://www.mainstreetliving.com)

Scheduled for the coming month:

**April 4<sup>th</sup>** ~ *Kid's Crossing* celebrates Easter, the day of the resurrection. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead! The featured speaker is Rev. Warren Uecker from Our Savior Lutheran Church in Madison, SD and St. John's Lutheran Church in Howard, SD. The sermon theme is "Alleluia Indeed!"

**April 11<sup>th</sup>** ~ *Kid's Crossing* goes with Thomas as Christ shows him the wounds in his hands so he will believe. The featured speaker is Rev. Jeff Kalb from Emanuel Lutheran Church in Sisseton, SD and Zion Lutheran Church in Waubay, SD. The sermon theme is "No Fear!"

**April 18<sup>th</sup>** ~ *Kid's Crossing* watch as Janitor Bob tells Simon about the Good Shepherd. Krista K visits with a modern day shepherd. The featured speaker is Rev. Steve Weispfenning from St. John's Lutheran Church in Yankton, SD. The sermon theme is "Restored!"

## How to Become A Member Of Trinity Lutheran

We extend the Sacrament of Baptism to all who have not been baptized—infants, children, youth, and adults. We invite those adults who are looking for a church home to come to one of our New Member Orientation classes.

Upon completion of this class you may join Trinity Lutheran Church in one of the following ways:

- The Rite of Confirmation for those who have never been confirmed in the Lutheran Church.
- A Letter of Transfer is gladly accepted if you wish to transfer your membership from another Lutheran congregation.
- Reaffirmation of faith is for those who have been confirmed in a Lutheran church but have not been active in their former church.

## Fit For Life



Why is the world so messed up? Why does God let bad things happen to good people? If we all use the same Bible why are there so many different denominations? Does God still speak to us today? Is His Word reliable? Is it relevant for today?

If these are questions that you have asked, please plan to attend "Fit For Life in Christ," an exciting course in Christian growth that presents the Word of God in new and meaningful ways. It is a course for those who are interested in membership in our church, or for anyone who wants to know more about our Savior Jesus Christ.

If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Moeller. We have several classes going and will be starting a new class **in April**.

## **A Longer Look at the Lessons**

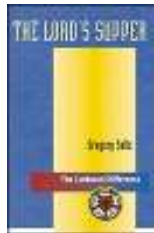
Delve deeper into each week's three Scripture readings with *A Longer Look at the Lessons*. This Bible study based on the lectionary in *Lutheran Service Book* provides information about each week's readings and their contexts. Questions and answers mine the riches of the weekly lessons while providing an opportunity for thought and personal application.

## **Lutheran Confessions Reading Group**

Would you like to have a richer understanding our Lutheran Confessions? Is the study of our Confessions only for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Catechism class? For that matter, what are the Lutheran Confessions? The Lutheran Confessions, taken from the Book of Concord are 10 special statements of faith that we use as a basis of what we believe. Far more than mere historical documents, they are still viewed today by Confessional Lutherans as a definitive statement of what it means to be Christian and Lutheran. Since we believe that the Lutheran Confessions are drawn from, reflect Holy Scripture, and are a summary of the Gospel, they are the standard by which all teaching and practice in our churches must be judged.

Our Lutheran Confessions Reading Group meets every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. In this class, we read from the Bible and *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. Class members have the opportunity to learn more about our sacred faith and grow in knowledge and faith in God's Holy Word. Everybody is invited to join us!

## **Sunday Morning Bible Study: The Lord's Supper**



As Lutherans interact with other Christians, they often find themselves struggling to explain their beliefs and practices. Although many Lutherans have learned the “what” of the doctrines of the church, they do not always have a full scriptural foundation to share the “why.” When confronted with different doctrines, they cannot clearly state their faith, much less understand the differences between denominations. This is particularly true when it comes to understanding the Lord's Supper.

Because of insecurities about explaining particular doctrines or practices, some Lutherans may avoid opportunities to share what they have learned from Christ and His Word. This Bible study will identify how Lutherans differ from other Christians in the teaching on the Lord's Supper in order that we might share our faith and help others understand the scriptural teachings on this wonderful sacrament.

All high school students and adults are invited to join us each Sunday at 10:45 a.m. as we study the wonderful gift Christ has given us in His Sacrament of the Altar, the Lord's Supper.

## **Life By His Word on Ezekiel**

The workman's trowel slathers mortar across the face of a mud brick. The trowel clinks and scrapes the excess from the brick's edges. Brick by brick, the workman slowly raises the walls of a new home. When he pauses for a drink, he stares westward, away from the village. Babylon's horizon appears as flat as a brick. He thinks of Judah's distant hills, the walls of stone his family raised there. Then he remembers how the walls toppled, the beams burned, and the people fled. He wonders if they will ever be restored.

From the plains of Babylon, the priest Ezekiel looked back upon the defeat of Judah and prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. He explained to the exiled Judeans that God's glory had departed from them because they had abandoned Him. But the Lord also showed Ezekiel a new day when His glory would return and the kingdom would become an everlasting blessing to the nations. Like all of the prophets and all of Scripture, Ezekiel points to Jesus Christ and the coming of His kingdom through His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return to judge the living and the dead.

Please join our Life By His Word Bible study each Wednesday morning at 9:30 a.m. as we explore this fascinating Old Testament book.

### **Men's Bible Study on Hebrews**

The Book of Hebrews is one of the most profound books of the New Testament. If you are looking for solid food instead of baby food, you'll enjoy the study of this book. This first-century letter is heavy on theology and is filled with all kinds of practical applications for Christian life today. But above all, it points us to the Fulfillment of Faith—Jesus Christ—the one who saves us and empowers us to live the new life! All men of the congregation are invited to join us each Monday at 6:00 a.m. for breakfast and studying this fascinating book of the Bible.

### **TLC Bible Study**

Each Thursday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. we meet to study the Bible passages for upcoming Sunday School, preschool, and daycare lessons. Everyone is invited to join us! If you would like to attend, but would prefer a different time or day, please speak with Pastor Moeller.

### **LWML 2010 Supply Collection**

The Trinity LWML is collecting supplies for use at Trinity Lutheran Church. Anyone wishing to donate would be greatly appreciated. Just place it in the boxes near the coat rack. Items needed, include:

|                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Paper Plates (6" or 9")     | Napkins                           |
| Foam Cups (Hot or Cold Use) | Paper Towels                      |
| Plastic Silverware          | Coffee (Regular or Decaffeinated) |
| Toilet Paper                | Sugar Packets                     |
| Powdered Creamer            | Window Cleaner                    |
| Palmolive Liquid Dish Soap  | Laundry Soap (Purex Free)         |
| Clorox Bleach               |                                   |

### **Vine & Branches Conference**



*Why Go To Church?* This year's Vine and Branches Conference answers this question at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lakefield, on April 17<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Going to church is important for the Christian! Three speakers explain this importance and dispel some common misunderstandings of worship. The cost is free and the meal is included if you register by April 11<sup>th</sup>. To register, or for more information, visit [www.vineandbranchesconference.org](http://www.vineandbranchesconference.org) or call 507-839-3086.

### **Camp Minneboji**

Camp Minneboji information and registration forms are now available here at the church (or get the this information online at [www.minneboji.com](http://www.minneboji.com))! Camp week is June 20-26 at Camp Okoboji in northwest Iowa. The camp, for kids in grades 4-9, features Bible study, mission presentations, music, craft, sports, recreation, and the chance to meet new Christian friends. This year's camp theme is "OutSTANDING!" It concerns the life of Daniel. The camp registration is \$255 (\$285 for 9<sup>th</sup> grade "Honors" campers). The registration deadline is June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Team Ty**



As some of you may know, in November 2009, three-year-old Ty Sichmeller from Trinity Learning Center was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. A "Team Ty" committee has been organized to plan for a "Team Ty" Family Fun Day fundraiser that will take place in July 2010.

In order to get seed money for this event, the Team Ty committee is asking for your help. On Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, we will be holding a fundraising event at the Hartford Pizza Ranch. Bring your family and friends out to eat for the night and a portion of profits made that night will go to "Team Ty".

For more information about the Pizza Ranch fundraiser or if you would like to join the "Team Ty" committee, call Marissa Moeller at 605-310-9769.

## **Stewardship Thoughts**

“April showers bring May flowers” is an old saying that is fairly well known to adults and children as well. It is very true that God blesses His creation with rain which causes seeds to sprout and grow upon the earth. This blessing of rain is something good that God lavishes upon all people, regardless of whether or not they are believers in Jesus as their Savior. And, because of the blessing of rain, seedtime and harvest will prevail and the earth will yield its increase and provide food for all God’s creatures. Not only does rain bring forth flowers but also the fruits and grains from gardens, vineyards, orchards and fields. God is good and His mercy endures forever. His rain will come not only in April but throughout the growing season.

We rejoice and are glad that God takes such bountiful care of our physical needs. That is important, but in April we will celebrate a special day which reminds us that God also takes care of all our spiritual needs. That day is Easter, a day set aside to celebrate the victory of Jesus over sin, death and the devil. As the Bible teaches, because He lives we shall also live. What great, good news that is to celebrate and share with others who also need to hear some good news.

Why does God lavish such rich physical blessings upon us? Dr. Martin Luther explains it so well when in the Small Catechism he wrote: “All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true!”

Why does God lavish upon us such rich spiritual blessings because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus? Again, in the Small Catechism Luther wrote: “that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true!”

God lavishes His rich blessings upon us to manage and use in ways that honor Him and bless others as well as ourselves. This is what we mean when we talk about Christian stewardship. God’s stewards freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for His purposes. This management includes taking care of God’s creation so that the physical needs of all God’s creatures are satisfied. It also includes sharing the good news of hope and salvation through Jesus who died for us and rose again.

## **Morning Prayer**

Looking for a great way to jumpstart your daily devotions? Each weekday morning at 7:30 a.m., we will be praying the service of Morning Prayer from *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. Anyone is invited to join us whenever your schedule permits.

## **SESD Lutherans For Life**

The SESD Lutherans For Life will be holding their next regular quarterly meeting at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Armour, SD on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Moeller is planning on attending. Please speak to him if you are interested in riding along.

## **Family Fun Night**

Join us on April 17<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall for a Family Fun Night! Everyone is invited. You can invite your friends and neighbors as well! We will have some friends from Africa join us with ethnic food, song, and dance. We look forward to seeing everyone in our Church family there!

## **Issues, Etc.**

REAL REFORMATION RADIO... Learn more about Biblical teachings like Sin & Grace, Christians & Culture, The Presence of God, God’s Will for Your Life and more. Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show produced by Lutheran Public Radio and hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken. You can listen to what you want when you want at [www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org).



## Prime Rib Supper & Silent Auction



Trinity Learning Center held its annual Prime Rib Supper & Silent Auction on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> with over 160 people in attendance.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Trinity Learning Center Prime Rib Supper & Silent Auction by donating items, purchasing tickets, selling tickets, bidding and purchasing items. Due to your generosity and a \$1,000 matching grant from Thrivent West Minnehaha Chapter we were able to raise approximately \$5,000.

Special thanks to Tim & Dawn Slowey, Talis Johnson, Adam Slowey, Pastor & Aimee Moeller, Jessi Moeller, Mary Krizan, Zach Wiseman, Austin Wolfe, Eric Wolfe, Thad

Johnson, Colin Kelley, Holly Kelley, Emily Krizan, Brady Johnson, Kylee Thompson, Austin Eggebraaten, Jenny Eggebraaten, for preparing the food and serving.

The Trinity Men's Club would like to thank everyone who supported our "Rent-a-Bum" auction. Because of your generosity we were about to raise \$1,990 for the lights in the church basement. Thank you to all of our talented and willing "bums": Louis Thompson, Derek Johnson, Thad Johnson, Mark Ullerich, Melvin Matthies, Andy Eggebraaten, Ray Matthies, Pastor Moeller, Joe Krizan, Eric Krizan, Austin Wolfe, Eric Wolfe, Bobby Potter, Nate Pickard, Tim Vilhauer, Colin Kelley, and Adam Slowey.

## YES Group Fundraiser

The Trinity YES Group (Grades 4-8) will be serving at Pizza Ranch on Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. A portion of all proceeds and all the tips will be used to help pay for camp registration at this year's Camp Minneboji. Please come and support this activity!

## Men's Club Volleyball Tournament



The Trinity Men's Club held our 4<sup>th</sup> annual volleyball tournament on Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. About 30 players from age 6 to 50 competed for the opportunity to be recognized on the prestigious plaque hanging in the fellowship hall. Winning first place was the EggJohns (pictured to the left), consisting of Talis Johnson, Derek Johnson, Thad Johnson, Brady Johnson, Colin Kelley, Jenny Eggebraaten, and Lindsey Eggebraaten.

The Moellers + 3 team (pictured to the right), consisting of Adam Slowey, Abby Totton, Laura Johnson, Jessi Moeller, Aimee Moeller, and Pastor Moeller finished as runners-up.

Thanks to everyone who came to play and watch.

