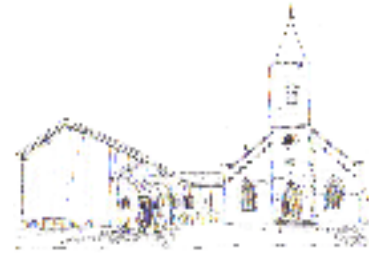


Trinity Lutheran Church

46448 263rd St. Hartford, SD 57033
Pastor Robert E. Moeller, Jr.
Home 526-3572 Office 526-3571
www.trinitylutheran-hartfordsd.org



June 2008

Pastor's Ponderings



Dear Christian friends,

Last month I wrote about a hidden treasure in our church, private confession and absolution. This month I'd like to address another treasure, one not hidden, but perhaps misunderstood and under-appreciated—the liturgy. The liturgy is the written order of the service that we follow each week in worship. The word “liturgy” comes from the Greek word *leiturgia*, which means “service.” By New Testament times the word had come to refer to the service (ceremonies) that a priest would render in the temple with the people as beneficiaries.

The primary purpose of the liturgy, as with hymns and sermons, is to teach or show us Jesus. For this reason liturgy is directed from God to us through us. God has given us the gifts of His Gospel and Sacraments that are distributed to us through ceremonies or rituals. The ceremonies of the historic Christian liturgy are really little more than Bible verses. But they are not verses that were selected and put together in a way that would teach the Gospel and show us our salvation in Jesus Christ.

The historic liturgy gradually evolved over the early centuries of the Church as certain scriptural passages were used to teach the basics of the Gospel. Mark 10:47 is one of them. It's called the Kyrie Eleison, which is Latin for “Lord, have mercy.” Another is Luke 2:14, called the Gloria in Excelsis, which means “Glory to God in the highest,” the song of the angels at the time of Jesus' birth. A couple of passages form the Sanctus: Isaiah 6:3 and Matthew 21:0, which picture the worship of the angels in heaven and the shout of the people as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Agnus Dei (which means “Lamb of God”) is taken from John the Baptist's words in John 1:29.

These Bible verses, along with the Nicene Creed, form the framework of the liturgy of the Divine Service. Through these Bible verses, which have been translated into hundreds of languages and put to various musical setting over the years, the Church has sung the Word of God's grace to herself for centuries. We are blessed by God's Word of love as we hear it, speak it back to Him, and share it with one another. In the liturgy, then, we are serving one another with the gifts of God. Whether the service is a hymn, prayer, offering, creed, or sermon, it is God serving us through the ceremonies performed by us.

God gives us His grace through the Word and through the Sacraments of Baptism and Last Supper. The primary purpose of each of these elements of the worship service is for God to bestow upon us His forgiveness through the Gospel and the Sacraments. Our primary activity is passively receiving those blessings of God's forgiveness, life, and salvation. Because the liturgy is comprised of God's Word, it brings these blessings to us personally and corporately.

This affects the way we look at our attendance at worship. Some would say it doesn't matter if you skip church. You can praise God while you're out fishing on a boat. You can pray and sing at home. And they're partly right. You can pray and praise God, and do it well, throughout the week. But they have the direction of the communication wrong. Contrary to popular opinion, we do not go to church primarily to pray, praise, and sing. We go to hear and learn and receive. Can you learn about God at home as well as from the pastor in the sermon? Can you get the Absolution at home? Can you get the Lord's body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins at home?

If the Divine Service is viewed primarily as our praising God, then you can do that just as well at home. In fact, you can serve God better in the world through your vocation than in the church building. But if the service is understood as God giving us the forgiveness of sins, then you've got to be there. It's

possible that the low attendance at Sunday services seen in so many churches today is a reflection of how we define the service. If I am acting, then I can do it another time. If God is acting, I better be there in the place where He has promised to bless me through His Word and Sacraments.

During the busyness of the summer season, it is easy to miss out on these blessings. Our weekends get filled up with ballgames, camping, and other family activities. Make sure you take some time to go to worship here at Trinity or one of our sister congregations so you continue receiving God's good gifts.

In Christ!

Pastor Moeller

P.S. Remember that we also have worship services each Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m.

Mission Statement

Trinity Lutheran Church exists to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation in preaching, teaching, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar, so that enlivened by the Holy Spirit through these means of grace we may give praise to Him, love and serve our neighbor, and spread the Good News of Christ Crucified into all the world.

Stewardship Thoughts

In the month of June we celebrate Father's Day. For those of us who are blessed to be raised by a kind and loving Christian father, Father's Day is very special. Men sometimes take too much pride in their physical and emotional strength and act like macho men who have to be in complete control of every situation. I was blessed to be raised by a Christian father who, I like to say, was strong enough to be gentle. He didn't have to force his will or way on anyone else, especially his children. He was confident enough to be himself and offer us the love and support of a father. The proper response to a father like that is love and joyful obedience.

God, our heavenly Father, is the best example of someone who is strong enough to be gentle. He made all things. He knows all things. He is almighty, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. If it weren't for the fact that God invites us to call Him "Father" and come to Him as dear children come to their dear fathers, we would cringe in fear. God is pure and holy. He is perfect. He cannot tolerate sin. And we know all too well that we are sinners. But He does not destroy us as sinners, but rather loves us in an extravagant and generous way, so much so that He sent His only-begotten Son to be our Savior from the power of sin, death and the devil and open for us the door to everlasting life. What a God! What a Father!

A number of years ago in our church body we used a stewardship education approach called "His Love—Our Response." This effort was designed to help us appreciate and reflect upon the amazing love of our and what our appropriate response should be. It was a good emphasis. It was thoroughly grounded in the grace [undeserved love] of God in Jesus. In our greatest time of need, God came to our rescue and did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He could have destroyed us because of our sin but, instead, He redeemed us by the precious blood of His Son, and through the power of the Holy Spirit made us into children of our Heavenly Father. What amazing grace!

Our proper response is one of stewardship, the free and joyous management of all of life and life's resources for His purposes. By nature we do not love unconditionally. By nature we do not give generously. But by the power of the Holy Spirit we are no longer controlled by our sinful natures. We are renewed daily to be God's children in action—His stewards who remember that God is the rightful Owner of all things and we are stewards or managers of that which He has entrusted to us. When our stewardship is a love response we experience great joy. We don't give generously of our time, talents and treasure because we "have to," but because we have the privilege of "getting to."

"Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes."

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. A new class will begin soon. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Moeller as soon as possible.

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 what it really means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. **We are beginning a new class soon.** If you are interested in participating, please speak with Pastor Moeller.

Lifelight Bible Study



When the Book of Jeremiah first appeared, it was cut in pieces and burned. It was rewritten and is now more than twenty-five hundred years old. There are about forty direct and indirect references to Jeremiah’s writings in the New Testament. Half of them occur in the Revelation to St. John, which compares the Old Testament kingdom of Babylon with the kingdom of Satan. Special passages in this study will help you see Jeremiah’s influence on the New Testament and his relationship to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

Please join the Lifelight Bible study each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., as we study portions of these two important Old Testament books.

Priesthood and Ministry



“So, what’s the deal? You Lutherans say that every Christian is a priest to God, but you have ministers dressed up in fancy robes who speak on behalf of God.”

“That’s true. Our pastors speak in the stead and by the command of Jesus Christ.”

“But doesn’t every Christian do that? I just don’t get it.”

As Lutherans interact with other Christians, they often find themselves struggling to explain their beliefs and practices. The Lutheran Difference Bible study series helps identify how Lutherans differ from other Christians and show from the Bible why Lutherans differ.

Our Sunday morning Bible study is exploring the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers and the office of the Holy Ministry. We will look at the distinction between these two wonderful gifts that God has given to the church the unique, but corresponding roles that He gives to both pastor and people in His plan to bring salvation to the world through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All adults and high school students are invited to join us each Sunday at 10:45 a.m.

Men's Bible Study on Judges



As “salvation history,” the book of Judges is summed up in the book’s last verse: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (21:25). Despite Israel’s disobedience and apostasy, God was faithful to Israel. Following the death of Joshua and before the rise of Israel’s monarchy, God preserved His people from being absorbed by pagan cultures through the ministry of savior-judges. Although immanently human and sometimes exceedingly wicked, God’s gracious work through these men and women foreshadows His greater work of deliverance through the true and perfect Savior-Judge, Jesus Christ.

All men of the congregation are invited to join us in the fellowship hall each Monday at 6:00 a.m. for breakfast and Bible study.

The Fire and the Staff



“Why do we sing all those same old hymns from the hymnal instead of the new songs they’re singing in many other churches?”

“Why does our church still insist on the practice of ‘closed communion?’”

“Why shouldn’t we make a few changes so our worship service would be more “dynamic” and “exciting.”

These are common questions that are asked today all across the country and even in our congregation. At its core, each one of these questions touches upon the relationship between doctrine and practice, between teaching and customs and tradition.

In his book, *The Fire and the Staff: Lutheran Theology in Practice*, Klemet I. Preus explores this relationship. Through stories of his own pastoral experiences, reflections on the Lutheran Confessions, the writings of Martin Luther, and Scripture itself, Preus explores the impact of the American Evangelical and Church Growth Movements on the modern Lutheran Church. Preus provides critical feedback to help fellow Lutherans evaluate the importance of unity of practice for our walk together as a church. He reminds readers that practice and doctrine are inextricably linked for those who are the body of Christ.

Pastor Moeller and the elders of Trinity Lutheran Church invite everyone to join them in reading, studying, and discussing this important book. It deals with many challenges and controversies facing our synod and congregation today and to discover from Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions how we can best walk together as God’s people gathered around His Word and Sacraments, sharing the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ with our neighbors and the world.

Each Wednesday night we will meet at the church from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. to discussion a chapter of this book. A light supper will be provided. Our regular Wednesday worship service will follow at 7:30 p.m.

Welcome to New Members



We’d like to welcome the two newest members to our family here at Trinity Lutheran Church: Clint Sieler and Adrea Bovee. Clint and Adrea were each received by profession of faith at our Ascension Day worship service on Wednesday, April 30th. We pray that God will bless Clint, Adrea, and our congregation during their time here.



June 2008

Cleaners, Greeters, Head Ushers, & Acolytes

Head Elder: Louis Thompson

Sunday, June 1st

Cleaners: John & Carlene Barber, Marilyn Matthies, Candace Nelson

Greeters: Marilyn Matthies, Candace Nelson

Head Usher: Ashley Matthies

Acolyte: Travis Eggebraaten

Sunday, June 8th

Cleaners: Leslie & Brenda Erikson, Keith & Sherry Rueter

Greeters: Leslie & Brenda Erikson

Head Usher: Ashley Matthies

Acolyte: Kylee Thompson

Sunday, June 15th

Cleaners: Talis & Laura Johnson, Tim & Kathy Totton

Greeters: Talis & Laura Johnson

Head Usher: Ashley Matthies

Acolyte: Erik Wolfe

Sunday, June 22nd

Cleaners: Ken & Robin Kleba, Archie & Lisa Wolfe

Greeters: Archie & Lisa Wolfe

Head Usher: Ashley Matthies

Acolyte: Eric Krizan

Sunday, June 29th

Cleaners: Denny & Walt Plagman, Chuck & Debbie Nelson

Greeters: Denny & Walt Plagman

Head Usher: Ashley Matthies

Acolyte: Travis Eggebraaten

Sunday, July 6th

Cleaners: Helen Wenzlaff, Pat Wenzlaff, Pastor & Aimee Moeller

Greeters: Helen Wenzlaff, Pat Wenzlaff

Head Usher: Patrick Erikson

Acolyte: Kylee Thompson

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|-----------|
| 1 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Adult Bible Study 7:30 pm Men's Club meeting | 2 6:00 am Men's Bible study 9:00 am—2:00 pm Friendship Trek VBS | 3 9:00 am—2:00 pm Friendship Trek VBS | 4 9:00 am—2:00 pm Friendship Trek VBS 6:00 pm Fire & Staff study 7:30 pm Worship | 5 9:00 am—2:00 pm Friendship Trek VBS | 6 9:00 am—2:00 pm Friendship Trek VBS 6:00 pm VBS Picnic & Closing Program | 7 |
| 8 8:30 am Private Confession 9:30 am Worship w/communion 10:45 am Adult Bible Study | 9 6:00 am Men's Bible study 9:30 am TLC Chapel service | 10 9:00 am Chapel at Tieszen Home | 11 9:30 am Lifelight Bible study 1:30 pm LWML 6:00 pm Fire & Staff study 7:30 pm Worship w/communion | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Adult Bible Study Father's Day | 16 6:00 am Men's Bible study 9:30 am TLC Chapel service | 17 | 18 9:30 am Lifelight Bible study 6:00 pm Fire & Staff study 7:30 pm Worship | 19 9:30 am Circuit Pastors meeting 2:00 pm Chapel at Leisure Living 6:30 pm Elders meeting | 20 | 21 |
| 22 8:30 am Private Confession 9:30 am Worship w/communion 10:45 am Adult Bible Study | 23 6:00 am Men's Bible study 9:30 am TLC Chapel service | 24 | 25 9:30 am Lifelight Bible study 6:00 pm Fire & Staff study 7:30 pm Worship w/communion | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Adult Bible Study | 30 6:00 am Men's Bible study 9:30 am TLC Chapel service | | | | | |