



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
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 Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

JULY 2018



On July 4th, we celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The war for independence, though, actually began in 1775 and would drag on until 1783. Before the war ended, the thirteen colonies formed a new nation (not simply declaring their independence) in 1781 with the Articles of Confederation. Their concern about having too strong a central government led to an ineffective government, so a new government was formed with the drafting of the Constitution of the United States. It went into effect June 21, 1788, which was when New Hampshire ratified the US Constitution (the 9th state to do so, thus putting the Constitution into effect). Being citizens of Delaware, we know that our state was the first state to ratify the Constitution, which was done on December 7, 1787, when Jacob Broom signed for us. You may not know that Jacob was a Lutheran. Yes, there were Lutherans in the USA from the very beginning and some, like Jacob Broom and Peter Muhlenberg, played important political and/or military roles.



Many believe that Martin Luther's idea about the separation of "estates" in his teaching about vocation, where the Church takes care of Church things and the government takes care of governmental things, is where the Founding Fathers got their idea of the separation of Church and State. If that is the case, neither the Founding Fathers, nor Luther, envisioned a nation where such separation meant exclusion of faith from public life. Even the "champion" of this exclusion idea, Thomas Jefferson, had Bibles printed at Federal expense for distribution to American Indians. I might add that his animosity towards Christianity has been greatly exaggerated. Indeed, Jefferson once wrote, "It was not, however, to be understood

that instruction in religious opinion and duties was meant to be precluded by the public authorities as indifferent to the interests of society. On the contrary, the relations which exist between man and his Maker and the duties resulting from those relations are the most interesting and important to every human being and the most incumbent on his study and investigation."

This is an interesting quote because Jefferson is assuming that our relationship with our "Maker" impacts every aspect of our lives, not just our worship life. In this he was accurate, at least from a Christian perspective. As Christians we receive our government as a good gift from God, which we support as long as the government does not require of us sinful actions. This same principle guides us in all our roles. At work, we fulfill our responsibilities unless our employer asks us to sin, say, by supporting abortion. In the home, children obey their parents unless the parents ask them to sin, say, by lying and saying to a bill collector that mom or dad are not at home when they really are. God is the highest authority, and we obey him in deference to all other derived authorities.

While such things do happen, they do not preclude us from thankfully celebrating all the good gifts God gives us through government, work, home, and so forth. As we think especially about God's good gifts through government this month, we can celebrate the freedom we enjoy in the United States. We recognize and seek to fulfill our duties as citizens, such as jury duty, obeying laws, paying taxes, praying for our governing authorities and our nation in general.

This Independence Day, let us not just think of our Founding Fathers and celebrate their bold decision, but also give thanks to the Lord who has blessed us with a good land and a stable government, one which still lets us worship the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And let us pray that God will lead us in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.

Blessings in Christ

Pastor

"For you have been called
to live in freedom,
my brothers and sisters.
But don't use your freedom
to satisfy your sinful nature.
Instead, use your freedom
to serve one another in love."

- Galatians 5:13

Digging In The Nicene Creed First Article, Part 2



I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

The world in which Christianity was born was polytheistic. How polytheistic? As a gift for my anniversary of 25 years in the ministry, I was given the book "Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible." The book is almost 1,000 pages long!

Most "gods" came in pantheons. So, you didn't just have Zeus, but also Athena, Poseidon, Artemis, and so on (all Greek). You not only had Re, but also Osiris, Isis, Rennuete, and so on (all Egyptian). The list could go on and on (as my dictionary proves).

Generally speaking, the ancient people believed *all* these gods and goddesses were real. The question for them was not, "Are they real?" but "Who is most likely to help me?" Because of this we find some surprising stories in the Bible. For example, because they abandoned the Lord, God raised up Assyria who conquered and deported the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As was the Assyrians' policy, they brought in other people to replace the Israelites. These people knew nothing about the true God. Wild lions began to attack them, and they concluded that it was because they did not know what the god of the land required. So, the Assyrian monarch sent a priest back to instruct the people. They added the true God to the rank of gods they worshiped (2 Kings 17:24-29). Adding a new god to the list of gods and goddesses they venerated was no problem.

In 1 Kings 20 we have a record of the Syrians attacking the people of God. Their attack failed. They reasoned that the attack failed because the Israelites' God was a "god of the hills" and so planned to draw the people out onto the plains, where his power, presumably, would be weak. The Syrians had no problem in believing the



God of Israel was real. They just planned to outmaneuver him, drawing him to a place where their god would be more powerful. (By the way, their plan failed.) Again, we find the reality of a polytheistic world.



Consider also the story in Acts 17. Saint Paul arrives in Athens. As he arrives he sees an altar to the "unknown god." He actually uses it as an entry point for sharing the Gospel. The point here is that they were so sure that all gods were real that they even erected an altar to placate any god of which they were not aware.

In this climate, the Nicene Creed proclaimed that Christians believe in "one God." All other so-called gods and goddesses were idols at best, the work of human hands (Isaiah 2:8). At worse, they were manifestations of demonic powers (1 Corinthians 10:20). Christianity is strictly monotheistic.

This would have been just as offensive to non-Christians then as it is today. They faced the same pressures to compromise as we do today. There is nothing new about the idea that "all paths lead to heaven." It is an age-old lie of the devil. The Nicene Creed rejects the lie. There is "one" God, not two, three, four, or four hundred (Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:5; Mark 12:29; Ephesians 4:4-5; etc.). When we confess the Nicene Creed, we confess that there is no other God than the one we are confessing.

Next month we will continue with the first article of the Nicene Creed and what it is we confess when we use this Creed. Until then, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

Through The Worship Window

July Continues Pentecost:



The Gospel message for July begins with Jesus raising a dead girl. This was early in His ministry and He went to His hometown. The people could not accept His teaching, for they felt they know He was not a trained Rabbi.

It was at this time that John the Baptist was killed by Herod. Jesus grieved the loss.

The next event was the feeding of the 5000 in the wilderness. After that event Jesus sends the disciples off across the sea and He later comes to them walking on the water.

The Epistle Lessons during this month include a reminder that we are encouraged to be generous in our relationship with others as Paul urges in his letter to the Corinthians.

Paul also shares that he suffers an affliction that God chose not to heal. The message was; *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."*

The Epistle Lessons continue with Paul's letter to the Ephesians and remind us of the many blessings we receive from our Lord. Our position in Christ is made clear.

Arlen D. Besel – Worship

A Pentecost Devotion From LHM:

John 3:16a - *For God so loved the world ...*

As of this writing, the men's record for running the mile is 3 minutes, 43 and 13/100 seconds. I only looked that up because while we were apart from each other during Lent, Roger Bannister passed away at the age of 88. He, for those of you who might not remember, was the first man to run a mile under



four minutes -- ever.

Bannister set the record by posting an impossible time of 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds. It was a record which remained unbroken for a grand total of 46 days. Of course, since Bannister's unattainable time was logged into the record books, a whole host of runners have sailed past his mark without nary a "by your leave." He did what many said and believed was impossible.

My sports fan friends tell me that there is any number of records which are "impossible." When I asked them for a list, they quickly came up with more than 25. "Narrow it down" I said, "so I can use it in a devotion. That took a while, but all five of them agreed on these four:

1. 110 career shutouts pitched by Walter Johnson.
2. Richard Petty's 200 NASCAR wins.
3. Ty Cobb's .366 lifetime batting career record.
4. Georgia Tech's one-sided 1916 football victory over Cumberland. Final score: 222 to 0.

With their list in hand I was ready to leave the discussion. That was when one of them asked me, "What do sports records have to do with a Daily Devotion?" "Not a thing," I replied, "other than our Lord has set a record which can never, ever be broken."

"And where can we read about this record?" they wanted to know.

"The first six words of John 3:16," I told them. "For God so loved the world." That truly is a record for the ages. That passage says God loves absolutely everybody. That's everybody. In that list is last month's serial-bomber. It includes Adolf Hitler, Genghis Khan, and every sick and twisted individual who has walked the earth. As you can tell from my language I don't love everybody. I don't even like everybody. But the Lord is different, and His ability to love exceeds mine by an immeasurable number. Consider, Jesus loved the people who placed Him on the cross, the repentant thief who hung next to Him, and the unrepentant thief who was on the other side. Oh, I almost forgot, Jesus loves me ... and you. He loved us with a love which calls us to faith in Him, who gave His life so we would not perish but have life everlasting. And that, my friends, is a record which can never be broken.

THE PRAYER: *Dear Lord, many things come and go. I pray Your Word, Your plan of salvation, and our Savior may always be appreciated. Let Your Word stand, and let the Savior's sacrifice be received by the lost, I ask this in the Savior's Name. Amen.*

The above devotion was prepared by Pastor Ken Klaus — Speaker emeritus of The Lutheran Hour "

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

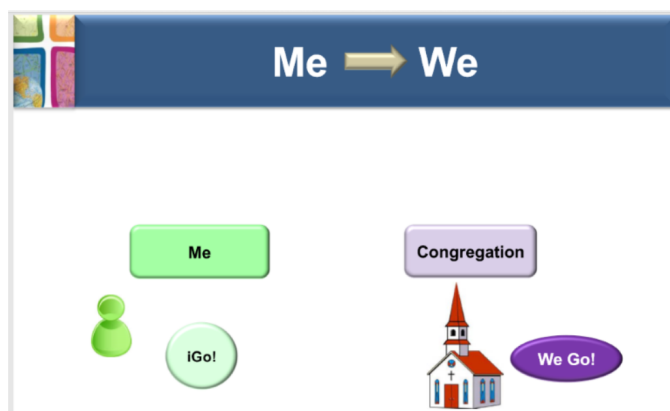
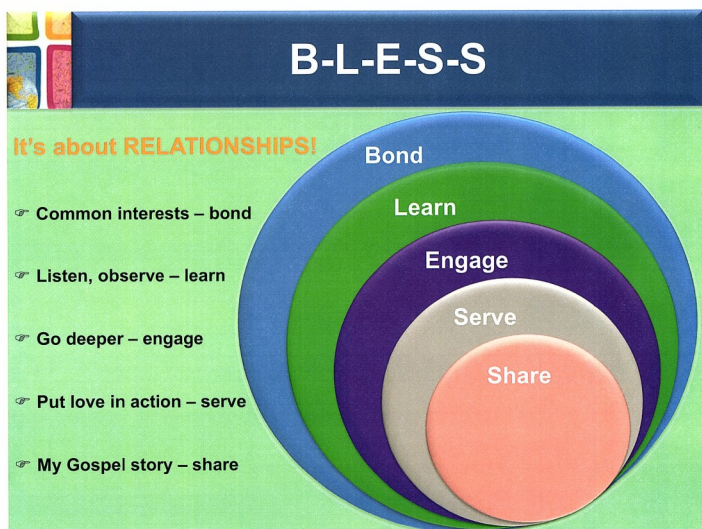
Show & Tell

Rescue me, O my god, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man. For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth. Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you. Psalm 71:4-6

As pastor is always reminding us (and rightly so), the whole Bible is about Jesus! In the Psalm quoted above, David speaks words of truth; words true for himself, true concerning Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection, and true for every believer in Christ throughout time. God shows His love for us in dying and rising again to life; He tells us of his love in His holy Word.

This message of amazing love flows naturally from our lips as Christians – the righteousness of God, our ability to trust in Him for every trial of life, and His continual care for us from the moment of conception until the last of our breath – and is the word that will bless our neighbors, both believers





and unbelievers, for the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all people, and works repentance, faith, and sanctification. The Holy Spirit shows us our sin, tells us of our forgiveness in Jesus, shows us the care of the Father, and tells us of Jesus' steadfast love. How can our lips remain silent?

Earlier this year, I reminded you about our focus on our neighbors, everyone we meet and those with whom we interact. It has been several months since we filled out the 9-square chart with our 8 closest neighbors. What have you learned about them? How can you bless them?

What about the people for whom we have been praying in Chestnut Hills Estates? What do we know about our church's closest neighbors? Come, walk with us on the last Saturday of each month at 9:00 am and get to know our church's neighborhood. Help us plan and work a neighborhood garden. These things will bless our neighbors and provide us opportunities to share the love of God in Christ Jesus with them. We will show and tell of all that God has done for us, how he brought us life, then new life, eternal life, with Him, forever, and how he daily delivers and sustains us until the Last Day!



Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair



Bulletin & Newsletter Information Dates

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!

What New Year's Resolution?

Did you make that New Year's resolution to read through the Bible this year, only to get bogged down somewhere in Leviticus or Numbers? Did you try it again this year? You are not alone in failing to keep your New Year's resolutions; apparently,

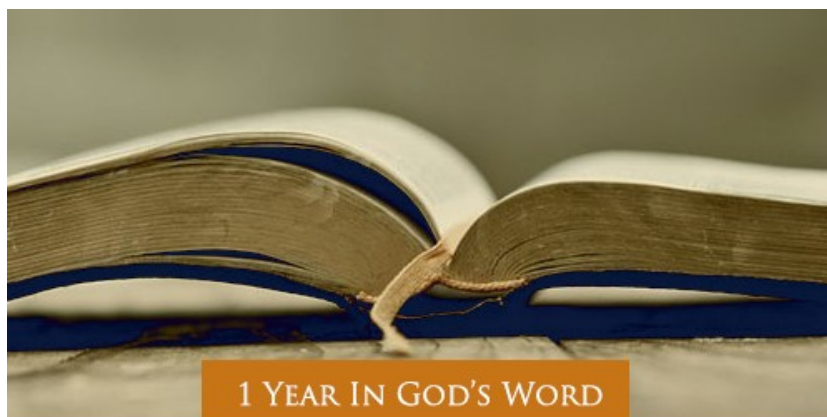
only 8% of people who make them actually keep them.

That, however, is no reason not to pick up and start again to keep those lofty goals, including the one to be in God's Word daily. It is food that nourishes our souls and gives us strength and guidance throughout each



day our whole life long.

There is a reading schedule in *Lutheran Worship* (pgs. 295-299)that gets you through the Bible in one year, plus the book of Psalms twice. It is a doable list.. Each month's readings will be included herein so that you can keep up, and, by this time next year, you will have succeeded in reading through all of Holy Scripture, and have kept a New Year's resolution! Let's get started:



JULY

- 1** Deuteronomy 31:1-4
1 Samuel 28—31
- 2** Psalm 28
2 Samuel 1—3
- 3** Psalm 29
2 Samuel 4—6
- 4** Psalm 30
2 Samuel 7—9
- 5** Psalm 31
2 Samuel 10—12
- 6** Psalm 32
2 Samuel 13—15
- 7** Psalm 33
2 Samuel 16—18
- 8** Psalm 34
2 Samuel 19—21
- 9** Psalm 35
2 Samuel 22-24
- 10** Psalm 36
1 Kings 1—2
- 11** Psalm 37
1 Kings 3—5
- 12** Psalm 38
1 Kings 6—8
- 13** Psalm 39
1 Kings 9—11
- 14** Psalm 40
1 Kings 12—14
- 15** Psalm 41
1 Kings 15—17

- 16** Psalm 42
1 Kings 18—20
- 17** Psalm 43
1 Kings 21—22
- 18** Psalm 44
2 Kings 1—3
- 19** Psalm 45
2 Kings 4—6
- 20** Psalm 46
2 Kings 7—9
- 21** Psalm 47
2 Kings 10—12
- 22** Psalm 48
2 Kings 13—15
- 23** Psalm 49
2 Kings 16—18
- 24** Psalm 50
2 Kings 19-22
- 25** Psalm 51
2 Kings 23-25
- 26** Psalm 52
1 Chronicles 1—5
- 27** Psalm 53
1 Chronicles 6—10
- 28** Psalm 54
1 Chronicles 11-15
- 29** Psalm 55
1 Chronicles 16—20
- 30** Psalm 56
1 Chronicles 21—25
- 31** Deuteronomy 32:1-4
1 Chronicles 26—29



BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Don Hartwig II
- 3 Ruth Hewlett
- 10 Anne Potter
- 12 Pam Jalbert
- 27 Greg Fiske

ANNIVERSARIES

- 8 Bill & Janet Stenner

If your birthday or anniversary is missing from this list, please email your information to me at: secretary.orlcde@outlook.com.

Would you like to experience a Sight & Sound show? Now playing is "Jesus" and it runs till the end of the year. If you are interested in going as a group sometime between now and December, please speak with Ruth Hewlett.



Come Walk With Us!

Who: You, your kids, grandkids, dogs, neighbors...

What: Neighborhood Walk

Where: ORLC, 10 Johnson Rd.

When: Last Saturday of every month, 9 a.m.

Why: To get to know our neighbors, get outdoors, etc.

