

## OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

July2020

### LIVE (NOT STREAMED) WORSHIP



In 1847, fourteen congregations from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, New York, and Ohio, formed the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. Exactly one century later we changed the name to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Whether you are considering the year 1847 or the year 1947, one thing is obvious: the American culture has changed, and those changes have impacted the church.

One major change-event was the development of the ability to record sound by Thomas Edison in 1877. Of course, the phonograph Edison developed is crude compared to modern methods of recording sound, but Edison's invention was the beginning. Now you didn't have to go to a concert; you could listen to orchestras, big bands, and so forth, from the comfort of your own home. It didn't take long for religious recordings to appear.

Around 1896, Guglielmo Marconi developed the first practical radio transmitters and receivers, which lead to the beginnings of radio being used commercially around 1900. Now you didn't have to settle for recorded music (or whatever); you could listen to it live on the radio. Of course, radios are much better now, just like recording sound is much better, but the beginning of it all lies with Marconi. It didn't take long for religious programs, like *The Lutheran Hour*, to develop for radio.

In 1927, Philo Taylor Farnsworth successfully demonstrated the first-ever electronic television. While it took some time for television to catch on (after all, who would buy one during the Great Depression, then WWII continued to suppress the new technology, not to mention the need for someone to produce something to broadcast), but by the late 1940s, and on down to this day, televisions have grown in popularity. They are so popular in America today that many (most?) homes have more than one set for the family to watch. Now you could not only hear your favorite music on a recording, or over the radio, but even watch professionals perform it on your television. It didn't take long for religious programs, like *This Is the Life* produced by the Lutheran Laymen's League, to develop for television.



I remember back in the 1970s when a friend of mine built a personal computer from a kit he had bought. I was not impressed and told him home computers would never catch on. Boy, was I wrong! Today, Personal Computers can be found everywhere. People even carry them in their pockets (we call them phones, but really they are pocket computers that can function as phones). Now we have entire libraries at the tip of our fingers and can watch professionally produced movies, music, and more, whenever we want. Needless to say, one can find all kinds of religious videos online. Our denomination has a robust online profile (<https://www.lcms.org>).

How such cultural changes have impacted the church may not be obvious at first, but the impact is very real. In 1847, if someone wanted to hear music performed by real people, church services were the main and best option. In 1847, if someone wanted to hear a sermon, church services were the main and best option. In 1847, if someone wanted to attend a Bible study led by a trained minister, church was the best option. Today, one can hear and watch all these things, done by professionals with very high production values, any time of the day and any day of the week. This has led many people to expect the same level of production values from their local churches, and leading some to become dissatisfied with local, not-so-polished, worship services and other offerings.

This exposure to professionally produced religious programming has only increased because of the isolation imposed by the coronavirus. I have to say that I was rather proud, or at least satisfied, with Our Redeemer's online presence prior to 2020. We had a Facebook page. We had a website. We posted our newsletter online. I even made videos from the audio recordings of our sermons and posted them online. Suddenly, it all seemed SO last century!

I have no crystal ball to tell me what the future holds, but I have one major concern: that the practice of watching our (or someone else's) worship service online will become a habit and encourage people not to return to worshipping with the saints once this COVID-19 threat has passed. All the advances in technology I've mentioned above have led us, as a culture, to be more and more isolated, cocooned in our homes. This is why we are so diligently seeking to connect with our neighbors at Our Redeemer. The current self-quarantining will, quite possibly, further enhance this trend.



The word "church" is a translation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, which literally means an assembly. The church is where two or more Christians assemble (together) to share in the Word and Sacraments. This assembling cannot happen over the internet, television, radio, and so forth. Certainly, the Sacraments, as Jesus instituted them, cannot be shared electronically.

Now, I certainly encourage each and every one of you to continue to participate with our online presence. Currently, we are streaming our Sunday morning worship services (10:00 AM) and live streaming a Bible study on Wednesdays (7:00 PM). I also encourage everyone to continue with their personal/family worship/devotions. For the family I suggest using Responsive Prayer I (LSB 282) and/or Responsive Prayer II (LSB 285), perhaps with different members of the family taking the "L" part each day. You may insert your daily devotions into these services, with them being read aloud.

What I don't want to have happen is for this isolating trend, encouraged by our self-quarantining, to become the "new normal." Certainly, when we open our doors again for public worship, we want to be safe, but we do want to open those doors and assemble together, for we remember the words recorded in Hebrews 10: "24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." For us to receive all that the Lord desires to grant us through worship, we need to *ecclesia*, that is, assemble – together. Until we can worship in person, and not simply via a streamed service, may the Lord who has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light, keep us safe, both physically and spiritually.



Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor

## Digging In The Nicene Creed Second Article, Part 14



*And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, **Light of Light**, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.*

Last month we began looking at the phrase "light of Light." Mainly we looked at how the Bible uses "light" as a metaphor for God and saw how the phrase in the Nicene Creed therefore considers Jesus to be God. However we notice that the phrase calls Jesus "Light of Light," not simply "Light." We spoke about how Jesus is God, yet distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit. The second "Light" accents this same but different nature of our Lord. There is but one Father and but one Son, just as there is but one Holy Spirit. As Scripture says, "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

As we spoke of in the discussion of the First Article, the Bible depicts the Father as the source of all things. So, while it makes no sense to us because the Second Person of the Trinity is eternal, with no beginning, and in a strict English understanding of the word "source" one would expect a beginning, we still confess that the Father is the source of the Son even though the Son has no beginning. An analogy used by the Church Fathers was that of the sun. For them the light from the sun could not be separated from the sun. As soon as the sun was created it was putting forth light. There never was a time when the sun did not put forth light. Nonetheless the sun is the source of sunlight.



It should not be surprising that there are things we can speak of about God while not really understanding how it is possible. Scripture tells us this is the case.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)

Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through. (Jeremiah 9:12)

They [Deacons] must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. (1 Timothy 3:9-10)

So, while the Father is the source of the Son, still the Son has no beginning. Nor is he a different God for "Light" and "Light" are the same. So, the Father and the Son are God, who with the Holy Spirit is One God.

Next month we will turn our thoughts to "very God of very God." 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 — Pentecost:



July begins with the Gospel message *Rest for the Weary* and the admonition; *Come to Me — I will give you rest — My yoke is easy and my burden is light*. The message continues with the parable of the sower and illustrates that Satan is always active, trying to remove the saving Word from believers in Christ Jesus.

The next parable is the one that tells of the weeds of Satan that are combined with the good seeds; God is patient in waiting to harvest so that none are lost.

The parables of Jesus continue with the hidden treasure and valuable pearl. With the parable of the net we find that not all will be accepted into the Lord's kingdom with Him being the judge.

As the Old Testament moves through July there are prophecies of the coming King and in Isaiah the promises of the blessings of the Messiah and the Lord's provision for His creation. There is also a warning that God's people must avoid idols, pointing out that they are only man-made images.

As the month ends the message tells of Israel as they take over the holy land in their migration to the land of promise.

The Epistle readings are from Romans and include the reminder that under Grace we are dead to sin and alive in Christ. Paul uses marriage as an example of our relationship in the Lord. The role of Law and Gospel are shown, and we are urged to live in the Spirit and hold fast to salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is our heritage as His sons and daughters.

Remain faithful to the Lord who is faithful to us.





## Spread the Reign of God

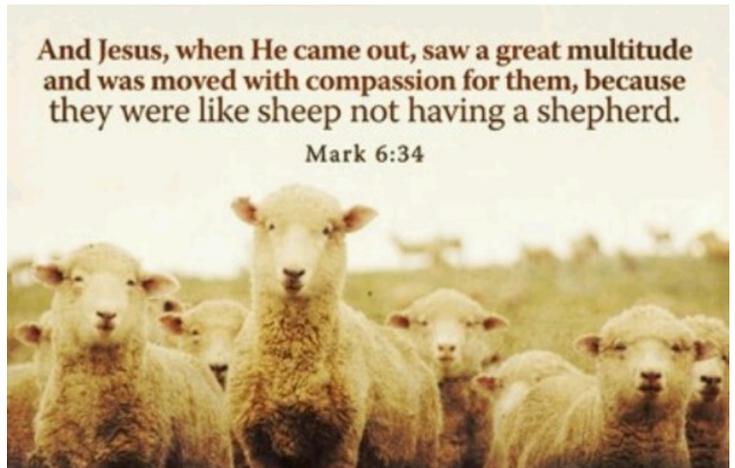
*"Spread the reign of God the Lord, Spoken, written, mighty Word; Ev'rywhere His creatures call, To His heav'nly banquet hall."*

"Enter, mighty Word, the field; Ripe the promise of its yield. But the reapers, oh, how few, For the work there is to do!"

If you could have dinner with any individual, past or present, whom would you invite? Some people might choose a long-mourned loved one, just to spend a little more time together. Others would invite a favorite movie star or a well-known athlete. Of course, quite a few of us would select Jesus as a dinner companion. But what if the choice belonged to Jesus? Who would receive an invitation to His table?

During His earthly ministry Jesus was criticized for eating with all the wrong sort of people. Those who considered themselves respectable and, in their own opinion, worthy of the Lord's invitation, pointed out with disdain that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. According to Jesus' own parable, it is *"the poor and crippled and blind and lame"* who find a welcome in His banquet hall (Luke 14:21b). Jesus invites the kind of unexpected guests He described in His Sermon on the Mount—the poor, the mourning, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and those who are persecuted (see Matthew 5-7).

These are the people Jesus calls to His banquet table because the invitation of Jesus does not begin with the worthiness of the guests. From start to finish, Jesus' invitation is all about Jesus' compassion. Everywhere He went, teaching and healing and proclaiming the kingdom of God, Jesus encountered crowds, and He had compassion on them. These people were not necessarily wealthy or famous or popular—although Jesus had compassion on those people, too. But the Lord sees all of His future dinner guests as they really are: "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36b). He sees them as He sees us all, sinners in desperate need of a Savior.



These are the people Jesus invites, the ones who need to hear the invitation to His heavenly banquet hall. They are guests to be included, sheep to be carefully counted, a harvest waiting to be gathered. *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (Matthew 9:37b). "Pray," Jesus tells us. Ask the Lord to send workers into His harvest. Pray for pastors, teachers and missionaries who, with the Gospel invitation in hand, will enter fields ripe for harvest. Pray, and then prepare to enter the harvest fields of your own neighborhood, workplace, and community. You, too, have invitations to deliver, because the Lord is at work, here and now, filling His banquet hall.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

## "Strength in Weakness"

By Rev. Travis Guse



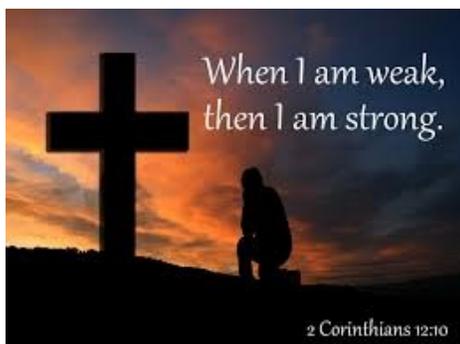
*Mission Engagement Facilitator, SED Central Region*

All around us, we hear messages about the importance of being strong. Fathers often say to their sons, "Boys don't cry." Physical trainers and sports coaches are continually saying, "No pain, no gain." Gillette came out with a campaign ad for Dry Idea antiperspirants with the slogan that now worked its way into our cultural mindset, "Never let them see you sweat." Who can forget Nike's tagline, "Just Do

It!" Taylor Swift reminds us to "Shake It Off." And who can forget Kelly Clarkson's hit song that reminds us that "What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger." These all come out of American ethos that emphasizes rugged individualism and self-sufficiency. And through them all, we hear this clear message, "You need to be strong!"

However, is that really the message we need to hear during this Covid-19 health crisis? Does it really help us to be continually be reminded that we need to suck it up, be strong, and put our big boy pants on? Yes, at times, the encouragement to be strong and persevere in the face of challenging circumstances is a good one. Yet, what about those times when you are at the end of your rope and can't go on another step? What happens when you dig deep and there isn't anything left in your emotional well? What happens when you look for light, and there appears to be nothing but darkness? When you don't know what day it is, all days can feel like Doomsday. How will you look to reclaim peace of mind in a world without it? Do you simply continue to fake it until you make it?

Amidst all these messages to be strong, there is another message we hear today. They are ancient words of promise that come to us for times such as this. Consider these words of the Apostle Paul from 2 Corinthians 12:9-11 - "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Paul found strength in difficult times not by trying to be strong, but instead by acknowledging his weakness. When he couldn't go on, he embraced that truth of his inability and gladly received a power that came from outside of himself. It was in the words that Jesus spoke to him, "My grace is sufficient for you", that Paul found real strength to face whatever trail he experienced in his life and ministry.



As Jesus spoke to Paul long ago, He speaks to you through these same words in the challenging moments we are all experiencing. He says, "My grace is sufficient for you". Instead of pretending that everything is ok, acknowledge the truth inside that you and God already know. Acknowledge that in fact, you are feeling weak, and in turn, Jesus will provide all you need, for He will be your strength. There is no need to hide the fact that you are angry, that you are experiencing a sense of loss, that you are struggling with loneliness, or that you are struggling with depression. All of these feelings are normal and are nothing to be ashamed of in this moment. And when we do acknowledge them, Jesus meets you, not with a message to toughen up and be strong. Instead, His power becomes perfect in your weakness, giving you what we need to face another day.

Part of how Jesus strengthens you with His grace is when you also acknowledge your weakness to another within the Body of Christ. In Galatians 6:2, Paul encourages us with these words, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". Again, our culture encourages us not to burden each other with our problems. However, life in the Kingdom is not only about dependency on Jesus, but also a life of inter-dependency on one another. In a time of physical distancing, you don't have to socially distant from one another. Reach out to a fellow brother or sister in Christ with a phone call or online. Acknowledge your weakness and struggle. Encourage one another in



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Bear One Another's Burdens

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the Word and pray for one another. The truth is we need one another, especially in moments like these, for when we are weak, it is then that in Christ, we indeed are strong.



### Reopening Committee Report & Worship Opportunity

Our committee for reopening the church for regular worship met on June 27th. It was decided that, for the time being, we will forego in-house worship service due to the upswing in COVID19 cases with the relaxed restrictions in our area. It was also suggested that we hold off on in-house worship services until we can live-stream them, so those who do not feel comfortable will still be able to participate via the internet. The Council endorsed these ideas and the equipment and needed training to stream from our sanctuary is being actively pursued.

That being said, we have planned an open-air, outdoor communion worship service for Thursday, July 16th at 7:00 p.m. (weather permitting). If you are not comfortable attending, please feel free to skip this service; we will still have our Sunday online presence. For those who feel comfortable coming, we look forward to seeing you! This service will not be available online. We expect it to be about 45 to 50 minutes long, so there should be sunlight still for the drive home. How often we will offer this opportunity to worship has not yet been determined.

The service will not include congregational singing; physical distancing will be observed; the Lord's Supper will be delivered in sealed, individual packages.

### O.R.C.H.A.R.D. Update

Our new rainwater tank, pump and inground waterline are all in and functioning! We have had a dozen people laboring lovingly to get this all accomplished. Now you can simply turn on the spigot in the yard and water your thirsty plants, or you can plug in and turn on the pump and have a gusher to water the whole garden! We've been keeping DNREC's Madi Walter updated on our fantastic progress and she has taken some great pics, as have others. I've included some herein.



We will have an LWML meeting Saturday, August 15 from 10 a.m. until Noon, so bring your lunch! We will have a Bible study, meeting & make pillowcase dresses. Bias tape & elastic have already been purchased & we have some pillowcases at church, but if you find any cute ones, feel free to purchase them so we can make happy little dresses! In the meantime, continue working on gathering things to donate to our auction, which will be Sunday, November 8 after worship.

Kathy O'Malley

### BLACKOUT DAY

You may have heard of "Blackout Day." The idea is to show just how important blacks are to the economy as blacks avoid spending any money on Tuesday, July 7 (or spending money only at business owned by blacks). This includes banks, grocery stores, gas stations, hair salons, and so forth. Many people with a different shade of skin are choosing to join in the one day boycott to amplify the message.



**July Birthdays**  
2 Don Hartwig II  
3 Ruth Hewlett  
27 Greg Fiske



**Anniversaries**  
8 Bill & Janet Stenner

*If we missed your special day, please call or email the church office with your info so we can celebrate with you! (302) 737-6176; secretary.orkde@outlook.com*

Due to our limited activities, no calendar has been produced for July.

## JULY BIBLE READINGS

- |           |                                      |           |  |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| <b>1</b>  | Deuteronomy 32:1-4<br>1 Samuel 28-31 | <b>16</b> | Psalm 42<br>1 Kings 18-20                |
| <b>2</b>  | Psalm 28<br>2 Samuel 1-3             | <b>17</b> | Psalm 43<br>1 Kings 21-22                |
| <b>3</b>  | Psalm 29<br>2 Samuel 4-6             | <b>18</b> | Psalm 44<br>2 Kings 1-3                  |
| <b>4</b>  | Psalm 30<br>2 Samuel 7-9             | <b>19</b> | Psalm 45<br>2 Kings 4-6                  |
| <b>5</b>  | Psalm 31<br>2 Samuel 10-12           | <b>20</b> | Psalm 46<br>2 Kings 7-9                  |
| <b>6</b>  | Psalm 32<br>2 Samuel 13-15           | <b>21</b> | Psalm 47<br>2 Kings 10-12                |
| <b>7</b>  | Psalm 33<br>2 Samuel 16-18           | <b>22</b> | Psalm 48<br>2 Kings 13-15                |
| <b>8</b>  | Psalm 34<br>2 Samuel 19-21           | <b>23</b> | Psalm 49<br>2 Kings 16-18                |
| <b>9</b>  | Psalm 35<br>2 Samuel 22-24           | <b>24</b> | Psalm 50<br>2 Kings 19-22                |
| <b>10</b> | Psalm 36<br>1 Kings 1-2              | <b>25</b> | Psalm 51<br>2 Kings 23-25                |
| <b>11</b> | Psalm 37<br>1 Kings 3-6              | <b>26</b> | Psalm 52<br>1 Chronicles 1-5             |
| <b>12</b> | Psalm 38<br>1 Kings 7-8              | <b>27</b> | Psalm 53<br>1 Chronicles 6-10            |
| <b>13</b> | Psalm 39<br>1 Kings 9-11             | <b>28</b> | Psalm 54<br>1 Chronicles 11-15           |
| <b>14</b> | Psalm 40<br>1 Kings 12-14            | <b>29</b> | Psalm 55<br>1 Chronicles 16-20           |
| <b>15</b> | Psalm 41<br>1 Kings 15-17            | <b>30</b> | Psalm 56<br>1 Chronicles 21-25           |
|           |                                      | <b>31</b> | Deuteronomy 32:1-4<br>1 Chronicles 26-29 |

