

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter April 2024

POINTS TO PONDER:

We just celebrated Easter. For “believers” that is a glorious thing. However, what things haunt the thoughts of those struggling “to believe”? Do we help or unintentionally hinder the “want-to-be believer” with our words and actions?

Ponder an unbelievers viewpoint: Does someone really want to trust a God whose followers teach that God’s only Son had to be murdered on a cross to satisfy God’s Judgment? Especially if the unbeliever is one of the many for whom the concept of a loving father is a totally foreign concept. Now toss in the stories they hear from the anti-Christian camp, which teach that scriptures, like Exodus 21:22-25 (*in part* “... take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot ...”), show that our God is cruel. Ponder that: *Is that the Abba, the Father, the Daddy you want to “adopt” you ... one in whom you place your trust for eternity?*

How do we answer those with such questions? Let us explore God’s nature and see if He is cruel, judgmental, and unloving, OR is God simply perceived to have those attributes because of the way WE (believers) behave and characterize HIM: There is a child’s song “*Oh, be careful*”: One version has a verse “O be careful little mouth what you say”, which is good advice for us all. Yes, God is righteous and holy, and His judgment was certainly involved in Jesus going to the cross. Do we, as believers characterize that as the act of a harsh and demanding God, or as an act of a God that “... *so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*”???? (John 3:16 WEB)

Let us explore “how” ... How this God of ours meets his people with love in the middle of all the mess they create ... a God who’s spirit is grieved greatly by our misdeeds, but whose Love never falters or fails ... a God that values Mercy over Justice: Think about that, the last thing we really want from God is justice for our behavior – while there may be unavoidable consequences, trust me – we seek God’s Mercy not Justice. Consequences are much different than justice: Just think about the words, if our actions had no consequences they would all be WHAT? Well, “inconsequential”, that is the word ... do we really want an inconsequential existence? I think not, I have never heard anyone opine the need or desire to live an inconsequential existence. Consequences are not judgment, nor justice, a non-Christian term karma is more appropriate. I digress, so back on topic ---

Deuteronomy 7:9 (NIV) Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

AND

1 John 4:8 (WEB) He who doesn’t love doesn’t know God, for God is love. (Note: The world for love here is agapé, or an “other” focused, self-giving, unconditional love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance)

God is all loving, knowing, powerful, and present. God exists outside of time (a created thing). Genesis tells us we are created in God’s image. God, viewing our world from outside of time, knows exactly how we are made, and how sin corrupts those things within us that reflect Him; like His sense of justice. Consider that Exodus story (above): Men are fighting and inadvertently injure a pregnant woman – the child is injured or killed. God knows the human father’s sense of justice is warped: If the father is powerful enough, upon the son losing an eye, the father might just kill the offender’s entire family, or

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maybe kill all males in the offender's village and sell the women & children into slavery. It is helpful to our unbelieving friend if we understand that God's instructions about "eye for eye", etc., imposes laws to curb humankind's warped sense of justice: God puts limitations on our desire for retribution disguised as justice (an act of love by God): If left to us, "righting" every wrong could be a Hatfield and McCoy scenario for generations.

Ponder this "believer": Our God meets US where WE are, with Love, not with what HE needs – Meeting us with a LOVE that includes sweating blood in Gethsemane by the man Jesus at the thought of willingly going to a death on a cross ... an event by which God the Son permanently defeats death, hell and the grave to rise in victory ... a Victory for US that includes the resolution of OUR - (*God breathed, but corrupted by sin*) - NEED for Justice.

NOT

A GOD that demanded such a horrible death for His Son, but rather a God who loved us so much that HE would allow such a horrible fate for his Only Son, because *HE knows US so well ... so well, that this is what it took to convince US* that God's righteous justice was met.

So, celebrate the Resurrection, and help our unbelieving friends understand the profound, loving, solution provided by God: A solution from before the foundation of the world. There has never been a "plan B": Jesus perfectly executed the one and only plan the Father, Son and Spirit had all along, before this world was spoken into being: Elohim (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) loves each of us (that means YOU) so much that He spun this world into existence with total foreknowledge of the cost. (*Note: in the Hebrew book of Genesis, the plural "Elohim" is the creator, and the action verbs used are singular – Our first peek at the trinity is in Genesis 1:1, when "they", in unison of activity, create the world.*)

From our Eastern Orthodox brethren, a summary thought —

"The wages of sin is death" is therefore an ontological reality (a reality of being) and not an externally imposed penalty. Christ died for us not because God had to kill us, but because sin's natural end is corruption and death. Jesus absorbed all the affects of sin and death, *including its psychological calamity of feeling God-forsaken*.

Chuck note: the "feeling God-forsaken" reference is to Christ's Cry of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" foretold in Psalm 22 – This, itself is a thing to ponder: Jesus, being fully man, not only suffered physical pain on the cross, but the psychological torment of God's turning away from OUR sin.

Chuck

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Announcements

Serving This Month:

Altar Guild – Celine & Velda **Greeter** – (Open)

Readers for Sunday Services

April 7 – Ann	May 5 - Karen
April 14- Doyle	May 12 – Maria
April 21 – Velda	May 19 - Linda
April 28 – Jenny	May 26 - Doyle

Learning with Fellowship

Ladies Bible Study: Ladies Wednesday morning bible study continues 9am-11am in the Educational Building through April 10th. We take a break until the fall of 2024. All ladies are welcome to join us when we resume the study in this fall. Watch for the announcement when we resume.

Sunday School: Each Sunday, 9 am to 9:45 am in the Educational Building. Open to all adults and children before church service. Coffee will be served. We will discuss the scripture readings for the following Sunday. **No Sunday School on the 14th of April.**

Meetings

Council Meeting Monday, April 8th at 10 AM.

Pot-Luck Meal – Last Sunday April 28th after service

Services

Sunday 10 AM.

Upcoming Event (see flyer next page)

Danevang Lutheran Church is hosting a “Betty & Eddie Vacek Fish Fry Fundraiser” April 6, 2024 == This will be “togo” plates only with pre-purchased tickets for pick up from Noon to 2:30 pm at Danevang Community Hall.

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Betty & Eddie Vacek

Fish Fry Fundraiser

(All proceeds will go to Betty & Eddie to assist with recovery
from a fire in their home in Danevang)

April 6, 2024

Noon- 2:30 pm

Danevang Community Hall

357 County Road 426

Pick- up Only

\$ 15.00 per plate

PRE-EVENT TICKET SALES

ONLY, NO PURCHASES ON

DAY OF EVENT

Contact Ann 979-541-6584 for more information

Sponsored by Danevang Lutheran Church

***Communities coming together to help one
another!***



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



Speaking Truth in Love

“But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.” – Eph. 4:15

I was recently asked my opinion regarding how churches, pastors and followers of Jesus should talk about difficult, hot-button topics in a way that is faithful but also does not exacerbate the divisions that often exist between us and the very people we are called to reach with the Gospel. This is an excellent question and is worthy of thoughtful reflection and conversation. I hope that this might spur-on thoughtful dialogue for you and your church as each of us wrestles with the tension between being faithful to what we know to be true and honoring God by loving those who do not share our faith or worldview.

While homosexuality happened to be the topic of interest for this person, similar questions have been asked about abortion and gender identity as well as other contentious topics where a biblical morality and a sense of personal freedom collide. Regardless of what the hot-button topic is, effectively communicating the Gospel is an ongoing challenge for any follower of Jesus. So how do we handle these sensitive topics while being mindful of our mission? We need to speak the truth in love.

Relationships are key to transformational love. The adage “people don’t care about what you know until they know that you care” rings true. I don’t think anyone had their worldview or moral systems rearranged because they were argued into agreement. Our priority must be to get into a position to influence another person. This happens best by building an authentic, loving relationship with people who order their beliefs differently than we do. How do we do this? We find a common interest, make an investment of time, and ask questions of genuine curiosity all while enjoying and celebrating the gift of sharing time. At some point, your new friend will likely reciprocate with curiosity and interest in you and what you believe. Eventually, God will give you opportunities for sharing the Gospel, opening the door for authentic transformation.

Attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit in these moments, courageously meet your new friend right where they are with the truth spoken in love. Recall the compassionate love of God that meets you in your sin, brokenness, and the arrogance of your better ideas. Draw upon that well, seeking to reflect God’s love in your own relationship with the person you are ministering to. Embodying the love of Jesus is critical as we share biblical truth and introduce the Gospel of salvation. With patience, persevere in loving those who see things differently. Remember: they are not an enemy to be conquered... they are the prize to be won!

Pastor Bryce Formwalt is the Director of Mission Growth for LCMC Texas District and Program Director of Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net). Residing in Georgetown, Pastor Bryce is available to coach congregations on mission. Please contact him with any questions or comments: 512-942-7776 or bryce@lcmctexas.org.

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Texas District Annual Gathering



LOVE WORKS

Luke 10:27

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

The 2024 Texas District Annual Gathering to be held at Zion, Kerrville is sure to be great event! An event which brings people together for great food and fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ to learn about ministry opportunities, receive powerful teaching, and worship the Most Awesome God! We look forward to welcoming speakers Greg and Susan Finke. Keep on eye on our website and in your email for more exciting details coming in the next couple of weeks.

[INFO HERE <- Click link](#)



LCMC Texas District Upcoming Events

April 7-8 - Solar Eclipse Viewing party & Lock-In @ Zion, Kerrville

April 10-11 - Lutherans for Life Adoption Conference @ Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston

Each Tuesday @ 1:30 pm - Online Pericope Study with Phil Daniels - Please reach out to Phil at pastor.phil.the.lutheran@gmail.com for a meeting link.

Save the Date

July 9-12 - LCMC Youth Event in Des Moines, Iowa

July 26-27 - Texas District Annual Gathering in Kerrville, Texas

We'd love to hear (and share) what your congregation is up to! Do you have some exciting congregational news to share, working on any mission projects, or hosting a special event that you would like to invite other congregations to?

Please send us your updates today!

For more information [CLICK HERE](#) for Hyperlink to Web page

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Date	Church Calendar	1 st Readings: Psalm, 1 st , 2 nd , Gospel
Sun, Apr 07, 2024	Second Sunday of Easter	Psalm 133, Acts 4:32-35, 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31
Sun, Apr 14, 2024	Third Sunday of Easter	Psalm 4, Acts 3:12-19, 1 John 3:1-7, Luke 24:36b-48
Sun, Apr 21, 2024	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Psalm 23, Acts 4:5-12, 1 John 3:16-24, John 10:11-18
Sun, Apr 28, 2024	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Psalm 22:25-31, Acts 8:26-40, 1 John 4:7-21, John 15:1-8
Sun, May 05, 2024	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Psalm 98, Acts 10:44-48, 1 John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17
Thu, May 09, 2024	Ascension of the Lord	Psalm 47 or Psalm 93, Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:44-53
Sun, May 12, 2024	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Psalm 1, Acts 1:15-17, 21-26, 1 John 5:9-13, John 17:6-19
Sun, May 19, 2024	Day of Pentecost	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14, Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21, John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15
Sun, May 26, 2024	Trinity Sunday	Psalm 29, Isaiah 6:1-8, Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-17
Fri, May 31, 2024	Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth	Psalm 113, 1 Samuel 2:1-10, Romans 12:9-16b, Luke 1:39-57

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☰ List
Month
Week
Day

April

2024

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Today
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 9:00 am: Ladies Community Bible Study	4	5	6 12:00 pm: Fish Fry Fundraiser, "togo" plates only with pre-purchased tickets, pick up from Noon to 2:30 pm at Danevang Community Hall
7 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	8 10:00 am: Council Meeting, Monthly	9	10 9:00 am: Ladies Community Bible Study	11	12	13
14 9:00 am: No Sunday School today 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	15	16	17 Women's Bible Study is on break until the fall of 2024	18	19	20
21 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	22	23	24	25	26	27 Greeter (Open) Altar Guild - Celine & Velda Readers April 7 - Ann April 14- Doyle April 21 - Velda April 28 - Jenny
28 9:00 am: Sunday School (adults and children) 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Doyle & Ann Schaer) 11:00 am: Potluck after Church Last Sunday of the Month	29	30				

✖ Canceled event
🏛️ Church Service
📖 Classes
🏠 Community Hall Booked
👥 Fellowship
📅 General
🗣️ Meeting
🎵 Music Practice
🌱 Serving This Month