

Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter October 2024

Pondering

We encounter trials, tribulations, hardships, and obstacles that do just not seem “fair”; these may be in relationships, events, finances, or health. We reflect back on the age old question, “Why does a ‘good’ God allow bad things to happen?” Let us consider for a moment, the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul was beaten, flogged, ship-wrecked & imprisoned on multiple occasions. All the while, Paul was confident, just as we can be confident, that God’s plan includes a personal mission for each of us (a primary point we shall explore). The early church attributed 14 books of the New Testament to Paul – there are newer theological perspectives claiming only 7 were written by Paul, 1 was not, and 6 others were written by his followers after his death, using Paul’s name. For our purpose, this “update of historical belief” is a distraction of little value, since all of the 14 books were determined by the early church to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. So, what if even one specific book was written by Paul’s disciples? If these disciples grasped Paul’s message, and appropriated it with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to publish it under Paul’s name to address new situations emerging after Paul’s death – Well, that is a gift of God, and to treat that book as somehow “second-class or fake” would be, in my opinion, an insult to the Holy Spirit.

So, the point: At least 4 of the “Pauline” books, indicate they were authored in prison, of those 2 are in that list of 7 that even revisionist theologians attribute to Paul. It is doubtful that Paul “wanted” to be in prison, any more than we would want to be in prison: Not an option Paul would choose, and it definitely interrupted his plans as a busy evangelist and church planter. So, God had a plan, part of that plan was for the Holy Spirit, via Paul, to put things in writing to guide Christians, even to this day. It would appear that Paul’s travels, busy schedule, and plans did not align well with God’s vision. Paul needed some down time to do this authorship duty – So, God arranged for Paul to have adequate time to devote to his authorship duty, and leveraged that confinement to inspire others: Paul spent a good deal of time, twice, in prison in Rome until he was executed (per church history).

Paul was well attuned to understanding that, what we think of as an unfair hardship, may really be God ensuring our mission on this earth is successful. Paul states so in Romans 8:28 (ESV) (*all agree written by Paul*), “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” -- Note the “*for those who love God*” and “*are called ...*” aspects we sometimes miss.

So we can get a look at how Paul (again in a book all agree Paul authored, from prison), came to understand just how God’s insight in Romans 8:28 (above) actually works (Paul’s “what has happened to me” in verse 12, below, refers to the fact he is imprisoned in Rome, under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard):

Philippians 1:12-26 (ESV) -- (emphasis in *italics and underline* added by Chuck for this Pondering)

12 I want you to know, brothers, that *what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel*, 13 so that *it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ*. 14 And *most of the brothers*, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, *are much more bold to speak the word without fear*.

15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim

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Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 *What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.*

Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 *for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,* 20 *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.* 21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* 22 *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.* 23 *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.* 24 *But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.* 25 *Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,* 26 *so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.*

There was a friend of mine that had a woman turn left in front of him while riding his motorcycle. His motorcycle was totaled, and he suffered a broken arm and a lot of road rash. When I spoke with him, he was ecstatic: His night nurse in the hospital was going through a rough time and simply could not understand why his attitude was so positive after his ‘accident’. After some lengthy discussions, his nurse agreed with his conclusion: He was the right person to talk through her ‘rough times’, and help her understand that God loved her unconditionally. The ‘accident’ was how this divine appointment was orchestrated by God.

Like Paul, my friend understood that our calamity may simply be God ensuring a ‘divine appointment’ can be arranged and kept, and made a choice (joy is a choice, not a feeling) for ‘joy in the faith’ (see Philippians 1:25 above). Like Paul (and the Blues Brothers, if you get the movie reference), my friend knew he ‘was on a mission from God’.

Ephesians 2:8-10(ESV) (emphasis in underline added by Chuck for this Pondering)
8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Things to Ponder: Maybe that flat tire, or traffic delay, made certain I did not encounter that drunk driver that crossed over into oncoming traffic. Maybe this trial & hardship is preparing me to help another see how God will help them to the other side of a similar situation.

Finally an old thought: How do I know if I have a God ordained mission on this earth?

Consider:

- God’s Word says I am His workmanship, created for good works, for which God prepared steps for me to walk in, to achieve God’s purpose for my life.
- As Paul noted, I would be far better off in my eternal home, in the embrace of Christ. So, the only reason for a loving God to leave me here, in this world, is to fulfill Godly purposes.
- Therefore, if I am still here on this earth, then my mission is not complete.

It all boils down to, “Do I still have a pulse?” If the answer is “yes”, then I still have a mission that is not completed. The needful thing then is to discern God’s plan and find those footprints He left for me to “walk in”.

Chuck

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Announcements

We are thankful for grants from Lutheran Disaster Assistance allowing us to move forward with repairs for damages from Hurricane Beryl. The Education Building roof is completed. The crew scheduled to do the Church roof were redirected to the Community Hall. The Community Hall roof is completed. This redirection resulted from the roofing company determining their company policies would not allow them to reshingle the church roof without adding roof decking to the existing roof structure. It is not clear if this is necessary: It appears the roof is 2 x 8 tongue and groove on an angle – maybe cypress, which may be superior to modern plywood sheathing. The addition of plywood decking may actually be an unneeded structural weight load on the building. We need to evaluate the recommendation for adding roof decking before proceeding.

Serving This Month:

Altar Guild – Linda Alderson

Greeter – Mike Alderson

Readers for Sunday Services

(Will be updated later)

Learning with Fellowship

Ladies Bible Study: Mondays from 9:00 – 11:00 am. All ladies are welcome to join.

Men's Group: Men of the surrounding communities meet for some fellowship and a bite to eat at 6 PM on Wednesdays in the Community Hall.

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 current Sunday.

Meetings

Council Meeting October 14th at 6 PM

Congregational Meeting after services on Oct. 27th to fill Church Council positions:

Ann Schaer and Chuck Keen have volunteered to serve again in their positions, which are up for re-election. We need to fill two other positions on the council. If you are willing to serve, please let Doyle or Ann know. We will also entertain nominations at the meeting. Individuals elected in Oct. 2024 take office for the term starting in Jan. 2025. Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to serve on the Council.

Pot-Luck Meal – October 27th

Community Hall Booked: Wanda Kidwell on October 19 & Bram Reunion on October 20

Services - Sunday 10 AM.



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



A Mission-Minded Lament

Last week I received the following email from a concerned church member offering a heartfelt and faithful lament for the mission of the church. I asked for his permission to share it with you anonymously:

I was going through some old documents at my parents' house today. I came across an old bulletin and I was at first amazed... and then scared. I grew up in a small town in Texas. Our Lutheran congregation was the big church in town, but not the only church. As I think back, everybody I knew went to some church.

The bulletin dated December 2, 1956 showed the attendance the previous Sunday had been a whopping 255 people! And this was no fluke: the attendance on Thanksgiving Day was 212! The 1960 census population for the town was a little over 600 people. In other words, this Lutheran church had regular worship attendance of more than 40% of the whole town's population while numerous other churches thrived nearby. Fast forward to today and that same church reports an average worship attendance in the 80s while the town's census population grew by 30% between 1960 and 2020. Today, about 10% of the community's population is in worship at this church. In 67 years, the attendance fell by 65% and the attendance as a percentage of population fell by 75%!

The attendance figures in my hometown church struck me to my core. Are we (the Church) doing something wrong? How do we deliver the Good News (law and gospel) to this generation? Are we missing some huge opportunity to get people to listen? For, if they do not hear, how can they believe?

I know that we can never bring back the past, but the Gospel can change the future and make it even better. Many people today feel hopeless, helpless, and numb. The news constantly talks about the divide among people: liberals and conservatives, skin colors and nationalities, rich and poor, religious people and the unchurched. Many people do not acknowledge their sin, are not willing to forgive and cannot comprehend faith, grace or salvation.

Contrary to the news reports and popular opinion, I believe that love, hope and joy exist in this world and are prevalent in the Church. The real Church is not angry old people criticizing sinners; nor is it Puritans conquering Satan. The true Church is the fellowship of saints who have grievously experienced sin, mercifully accepted forgiveness, and found the love, hope and joy that abounds within them as a gift of God's grace. And they freely and joyfully share these gifts with others (especially those different than themselves) through their everyday lives.

If this was how the Church was known in the world, do you think people would want to listen? How do we (including the whole LCMC) become that kind of Church? Any ideas? Lots of prayers and contemplation. Enough for now.

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.

WINTER RETREAT

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John 13:34

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Context: Danevang Lutheran Church Newsletter June 2024

2nd Half of 2024 Lectionary Year Calendar -- Three-Year Series : "B" thru end of Nov., then year "C"						
Church Season	Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
Pentecost	Oct. 6 (Prop. 22)	Twentieth S. a. Pentecost	Gen. 2:18–25	Psalm 128	Heb. 2:1–13 (14–18)	Mark 10:2–16
	Oct. 13 (Prop. 23)	Twenty-first S. a. Pentecost	Amos 5:6–7, 10–15	Psalm 90:12–17	Heb. 3:12–19	Mark 10:17–22
	Oct. 20 (Prop. 24)	Twenty-second S. a. Pentecost	Eccl. 5:10–20	Psalm 119:9–16	Heb. 4:1–13 (14–16)	Mark 10:23–31
REFORMATION	Oct. 27 (<i>observed</i>)	Reformation Day (Oct. 31)	Rev. 14:6–7	Psalm 46	Rom. 3:19–28	John 8:31–36 <i>or</i> Matt. 11:12–19
	<i>or</i> (Proper 25)	Twenty-third S. a. Pentecost	Jer. 31:7–9	Psalm 126	Heb. 7:23–28	Mark 10:46–52
ALL SAINTS' DAY	Nov. 3 (<i>observed</i>)	All Saints' Day (Nov. 1)	Rev. 7:(2–8) 9–17	Psalm 149	1 John 3:1–3	Matt. 5:1–12
	<i>or</i> (Prop. 26)	Twenty-fourth S. a. Pentecost	Deut. 6:1–9	Psalm 119:1–8	Heb. 9:11–14 (15–22)	Mark 12:28–37
	Nov. 10 (Prop. 27)	Twenty-fifth S. a. Pentecost	1 Kings 17:8–16	Psalm 146	Heb. 9:24–28	Mark 12:38–44
	Nov. 17 (Prop. 28)	Twenty-sixth S. a. Pentecost	Dan. 12:1–3	Psalm 16	Heb. 10:11–25	Mark 13:1–13
THANKSGIVING	Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Day	Deut. 8:1–10	Psalm 67	Phil. 4:6–20 <i>or</i> 1 Tim. 2:1–4	Luke 17:11–19
	Nov. 24 (Prop. 29)	Last S. of the Church Year	Is. 51:4–6	Psalm 93	Jude 20–25	Mark 13:24–37
New Church Year Starts Here (Series C)						
ADVENT 2024	Dec. 1 2024	First S. in Advent	Jer. 33:14–16	Psalm 25:1–10	1 Thess. 3:9–13	Luke 19:28–40 <i>or</i> Luke 21:25–36
	Dec. 8	Second S. in Advent	Mal. 3:1–7b	Psalm 66:1–12	Phil. 1:2–11	Luke 3:1–14 (15–20)
	Dec. 15	Third S. in Advent	Zeph. 3:14–20	Psalm 85	Phil. 4:4–7	Luke 7:18–28 (29–35)

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	Dec. 22	Fourth S. in Advent	Micah 5:2–5a	Psalm 80:1–7	Heb. 10:5–10	Luke 1:39–45 (46–56)
	Dec. 24 <i>Eve</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord <i>(Christmas Eve)</i>	Is. 7:10–14	Psalm 110:1–4	1 John 4:7–16	Matt. 1:18–25
CHRISTMAS 2024	Dec. 25 <i>Midnight</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord <i>(Christmas Midnight)</i>	Is. 9:2–7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11–14	Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)
	Dec. 25 <i>Dawn</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord <i>(Christmas Dawn)</i>	Is. 62:10–12	Psalm 98	Titus 3:4–7	Luke 2:(1–14) 15–20
	Dec. 25 <i>Day</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord <i>(Christmas Day)</i>	Is. 52:7–10	Psalm 2	Heb. 1:1–6 (7–12)	John 1:1–14 (15–18)
	Dec. 29	First S. a. Christmas	Ex. 13:1–3a, 11–15	Psalm 111	Col. 3:12–17	Luke 2:22–40
	Dec. 31	Eve of the Circ. and Name of Jesus <i>(New Year’s Eve)</i>	Is. 30:(8–14) 15–17	Psalm 90:1–12	Rom. 8:31b–39	Luke 12:35–40

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Events in October 2024

Grid Cards List Month Week Day
October 2024 Go
< Today >

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 6:00 pm: Men's Group	3	4	5
6 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	7 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM	8	9 6:00 pm: Men's Group	10	11	12
13 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	14 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM 6:00 pm: Council Meeting on 2nd Monday	15	16 6:00 pm: Men's Group	17	18	19 Community Hall Booked
20 Community Hall Booked 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight)	21 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM	22	23 6:00 pm: Men's Group	24	25	26
27 9:00 am: Sunday School 10:00 am: Sunday Church Service 10 A.M. (Pastor Kight) 11:00 am: Congregational Meeting: Elect positions to Council for 2025 11:00 am: Potluck after Church 4th Sunday of the Month	28 9:00 am: Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM	29	30 6:00 pm: Men's Group	31		

Canceled event
 Church Service
 Classes
 Community Hall Booked
 Fellowship
 General
 Meeting
 Music Practice

Serving This Month
All Categories

Print