

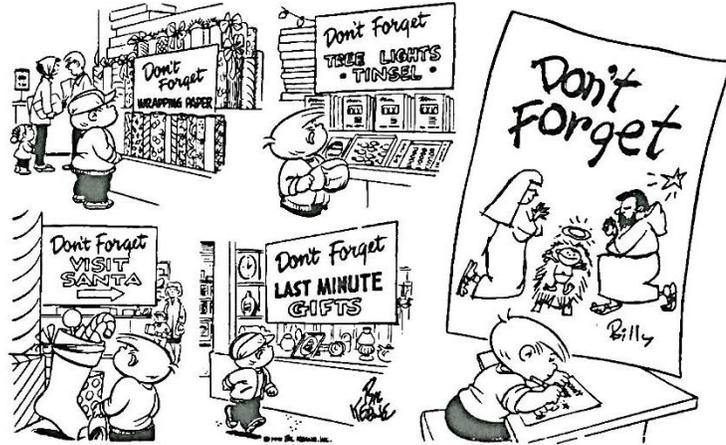
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
Tacoma, Washington

GOOD SHEPHERD NEWS

December 2014



THE FAMILY CIRCUS



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Christ the Savior is Born MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Revisiting the Augsburg Confession:

Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment

Having just wrapped up November, together with the end of the previous Church year, this month's review of the 17th Article of the Augsburg Confession may sound pretty familiar. It is a simple confession of what Scripture teaches on the matter of Jesus' Second Coming, as well as a firm rejection of at least two errors running about in the 16th century. First, the affirmation:

Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.

In this brief statement, the positive teachings of Holy Scripture are preserved. Jesus will in fact come again; He will come suddenly and decisively; He will raise all the dead; to His saints He will give eternal life; the damned He will deliver to eternal hell. For all the fuzziness of various end times teachers and teachings, the Lutheran Reformers made their stand on the clearest testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles of Jesus Christ. No fuzz anywhere on this peach.

But for the errors, only two are addressed, since these were apparently the two big ones running about at their time. The first has to do with this idea that hell won't be forever, which was an error being taught by the Radical Reformation (often called the Anabaptists, because they rejected infant baptism, and re-baptized Christians into their new communities.) While this certainly wasn't the only error of the Anabaptists, it was a dangerous one that needed to be addressed. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that hell will have an end. In fact, Jesus, who speaks about hell more than anyone else in the Bible, specifically says that the torment of the damned shall never end. Just as heaven is forever for the saints, so is hell forever to those who reject God and His salvation in Jesus Christ. Teaching people that they could eventually get out of hell regardless of their faith or repentance is not only a rejection of Scripture's teaching on the subject, but it is a rejection of the Doctrine of Justification by Grace through Faith in Christ alone. Sadly, this error has continued in the Church ever since, now held mostly by the liberal wing of various shrinking Protestant sects.

Secondly, the error of Millennialism is also condemned—an idea that somehow or another, before Jesus comes again to judge the living and the dead, a godly kingdom will arise to rule the world and build a utopia on earth. Scripture paints no such picture. In fact, Scripture tells us that things are going to get much, much worse right before the end, so that Jesus can rhetorically ask, “will there be faith still on the earth when I come?” Like birth pangs, the world will go through all kinds of awful things between now and when the Lord returns: wars, famines, catastrophes and calamities of all sorts. But at the end, it will look pretty bleak, such that Jesus tells us this time of calamity will be cut short for the sake of the elect, lest no flesh would survive at all. However, this error dominated the church during the 19th and 20th centuries, where people really thought they could build utopia on earth before Jesus returned. The 20th century devastations of WWI, WWII, the Cold War (including Korea and Vietnam,) and the deaths of hundreds of millions under atheistic communist and socialist revolutions (like those in Germany, Russia, China, and southeast Asia,) showed us the contrary, just as the rise of militant Islam in the Middle East, southwest Asia, parts of Europe, and Africa teach us the same awful lesson in the 21st century. Scripture is true, and man is fundamentally flawed. We cannot build utopia on earth, and when we try, we often end up with horrors beyond our imagining.

So what is a Christian to do with all this? We are to trust, that our Savior Jesus Christ, who has sought us out and purchased us with His own most holy Blood, will be our salvation in this day, and every day—even on the Last Day, and forever into eternity. While there will most certainly be an end to evil, we cling to the promise of the Gospel, that for Jesus' sake we are saved even through all the convolutions of a sinful and broken world. We cling to the clear promises of Jesus for His Second Coming, just as the faithful Old Testament people of God clung to the promises of His First Coming. While we wait for the Lord's sure return, we also return with the Church to the waiting and preparation of Advent, knowing that the Lord's promises in Holy Scripture are true. We wait, knowing that our Savior's coming for us, is our life, our redemption, and our salvation. Amen.

Pastor Brad

Music in God's Ears

As we enter a new Church Year, your humble servant has chosen to discuss some topics and answer some questions that have been raised during conversations around the Parish. In that vein, I would like to commend to you the recent (and very relevant) October issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. It was devoted to the Music of the Church. My well read and dog-eared copy is ready to be loaned to anyone who missed the chance to read it. The topics covered are familiar to any student of things Liturgical and Musical but the issue was very good at breaking things down for the average worshipper. I found it very helpful and enjoyable to read.

In his Preface, Synodical President Matthew C. Harrison discussed a question often asked: **“Why do we have the same Liturgy every Sunday?”** And also the corollary **“Why DON’T we have the same Liturgy every Sunday?”**

Obviously, both questions are purposely posed (by this author) in such a way as to emphasize their oppositeness. It can’t be true that we have the same Liturgy every Sunday, as we have just made a switch. And it would likewise be foolish to suggest that the Liturgy were NEVER to change, as that would take away rich traditions such as omitting the Hymn of Praise (or Gloria) and Alleluia during Advent and Lent. To quote Dr. Harrison’s aforementioned Preface at length:

Luther applied his thoughts on Christian freedom to the matter of worship. Under the Gospel, “a Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.” Under the law of love, “a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all”. There is unbelievable freedom in worship (Gal. 5:1). Yet, as St. Paul teaches, we are to use our freedom in service to our neighbor, and we therefore accept limits to our freedom (Gal. 5:13).

It would be irksome or even offensive for everyone to have completely different worship practices and forms every week, though it would not necessarily be sinful. Many would find it irksome and tiring to have no variety in the weekly service. The hymnal allows both stability and variety. To be sure, the freedom we have stretches beyond using the hymnal, so long as what is done in song and liturgy does not confound the Gospel and detract from Christ. We do say, however, that the order of the service should be followed. At the least, the parts of the service should be present. Why? They hold up Christ and

deliver the Gospel. We should not omit a clear confession of sins by the people and absolution by the pastor. We should not ditch the readings. We should and must preach textual sermons, with clear Law and Gospel applied to those present. The Lord’s Supper should follow confession and preaching as preparation. We should not be messing with the Lord’s Words of Institution. We are to be responsible in distributing the Sacrament to those who confess that the body and blood that are present and who are in confessional fellowship with us.

There are, of course, excellent reasons for choosing one particular MUSICAL setting of Divine Service or another and holding fast year round. Such consistency brings comfort and ease of Worship. One never need guess what is coming or wonder the tune to sing for “The Lamb of GOD” (Agnus Dei).

The question would then be “which setting?” Some may long for a return to the old “Red Hymnal” pp. 5/15 which is, more or less, retained in the current *Lutheran Service Book* Setting III. Others who have migrated to Good Shepherd from Congregations that adopted either the “Blue” *Lutheran Worship* or the “Green” *Lutheran Book of Worship* may find solace and familiarity with Settings I and II which were the main services in those volumes.

Balance is the key. Much discussion was had among your worship leaders recently regarding when to change settings as we approached the seasons of Advent and Christmas. It seems wise to linger long enough in a given setting that it can become easy but not so long that it becomes routine or boring. That being said, not everyone will love every part of each setting and it would seem cruel to force them into enduring in-and-out-every-Sunday-all-the-year-round settings that are troublesome.

So we begin Advent with Setting II. Its blessings are in its extremes. It opens with a wrenchingly heartfelt Kyrie but the Hymn of Praise (omitted until Christmas) and Post-Communion Canticule are some of the most raucously joyful music in the *LSB*.

I invite the congregation to embrace the seasonal changes of Settings and appreciate how they can inform and reinforce the sense of the season. And if one or another setting troubles or especially edifies, you always have the ear of...

Your Humble Servant,
DVP
(Denes Van Parys)

Advent Midweek Evening Services:

“Come, Lord Jesus...and Show Us the Father.”

Our Advent Midweek series provides three catechetical sermons focusing on the First Article of the Apostle’s Creed and the explanation by Martin Luther as found in the Small Catechism. Each sermon is based on a familiar psalm and one part of Luther’s explanation of the First Article. Services begin at 7 pm and are preceded at 6 pm by a soup supper.

December 3rd Jesus Shows us Our Creator – Psalm 95:1-7
December 10th: Jesus Shows us Our Provider – Psalm 104:27-30
December 17th: Jesus Shows us the Father’s Heart – Psalm 103:11-13

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services

Our Christmas schedule includes two services on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Family Christmas Service
7:00 p.m.

Service of Lessons and Carols
11:00 p.m.

One service on Christmas Day, December 25th, 10 a.m.

To close out the year 2014, and to look ahead to 2015,
we have a **New Year’s Eve Service with Holy Communion:**
December 31st – 7:00 p.m.

Men’s Breakfast / Bible Study Saturday, December 20th – 8 am

Join us for a delicious breakfast, wonderful fellowship, and in-depth Bible Study. We are going through the series “Stuff They Didn’t Teach Me in Sunday School.” We will be discussing the chapter “The Cowardly Judge” (Judges 6-8)



Pastor Dan

FINANCIAL UPDATE



Our financial picture is still in critical condition. Although we have been able to meet our budget for November, we are still over \$18,000 short for the rest of the year. Currently we need about \$30,000 to meet all monthly obligations. As of this writing, the first three weeks of November have allowed us to take care of the majority of those obligations. As we get an excess in our contributions, we will be able to repay the reserves borrowed from. Thank you to all who have taken this matter to heart and have arisen to the occasion.





-Preschool News

www.littlelambstacoma.com

Sharing Christ, Feeding Lambs

Thank you to all who participated with our cookie and 2015 wall calendar fundraisers.

The cookie sales totaled about **\$240** and our calendar sales are still going. Please let us know if you would like to order a **\$10** calendar with photographs of nature from people you know. We appreciate your donations with these fundraisers as money is going towards new storage cabinetry and a new bookshelf for the classrooms.

Our new and ongoing fundraiser has been set up by Mike Dean through Amazon.com. If you will be doing any shopping with Amazon, please access it through our Little Lambs Website. By doing this simple step first, Amazon will donate to the preschool! It costs

you no extra money...just the extra step of using the preschool website first. We would sincerely appreciate your time with this as it is an easy way to donate to the preschool without spending any extra money. Thank you!

Please remember to keep our students and their families as well as our preschool staff and board in your prayers. May God bless you in December as we prepare our hearts together to worship Jesus – the Newborn King!

Bonnie Huset
Director / Teacher

ANNUAL VOTERS MEETING DECEMBER 7TH

Mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend our Annual Voters Meeting following the Worship Services on Sunday, December 7th at 12 pm. We will be voting on the 2015 Spending Guide, Open Board Positions, and our Mission Project.



Project Christmas 2014 Is Here!

We once again have the opportunity to share with those in need. We will be “adopting” children and adults this year. Names and gift suggestions are available either through the church office or following worship services in the Narthex. Any money collected will be used to help prepare the 40 plus food baskets we give away to the needy for Christmas. Thank you for your help!





Women in Mission / Women's Ministry

- **Tuesdays:**
 - Bible Study** (9:15 am) **Quilting** (10 am)
- **Mites and Missions** –November 9th
- **Seafarers' Auxiliary** – November 25th

Blessed Christmas to all!

A few notes...

Thanks to all who helped and contributed for the 150 Seafarers Christmas Boxes, especially the knitters!

Thanks to the quilters for making 62 quilts!

Thanks to Matt Brehmer for taking them to Seattle.

Answer to the question, "What do I do with my Mite Box?" ... Put it in the Mite Box in the Narthex or empty it in an envelope marked, "Mites" (not in offering envelope) and put it in the offering.

Thanks to all who helped with the November 15th wedding. I am still under the weather. You are true sisters in Christ!

Serving the Lord with Gladness!

Jane Oberg

Lunch Bunch News

We have changed our meeting day to the 2nd **Thursday** of each month. So, that means we will meet in **December** on the **11th**. Join us at **11:30 am** for a pot blessing meal and a "white elephant" gift exchange. Bring a dish to share and a gift with a value of not over \$5.

LCMS President Harrison Calls

Giving Tuesday "an enormous opportunity"

On Dec. 2, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is participating in Giving Tuesday, an online effort to encourage people around the world to make a difference through charitable giving on a single day.

"We have an enormous opportunity before us right now," Harrison said. "The world is open to us. Our challenges are enormous. We want to double the number of missionaries around the world over the next few years and that is not going to happen without you."

Donations on Giving Tuesday support both internationally- and nationally-focused Gospel-sharing work, wherever the need is greatest. The LCMS is increasing the number of international missionaries, and beginning to call and send

missionaries domestically who will reach out to the growing numbers of unbelievers moving to our nation's urban and inner-city neighborhoods. No gift is too small. No gift is too ambitious.

"Join us, please," Harrison said. "Help us out, whatever you can give to get the Gospel out around the world."

The LCMS' "Give Graciously. Give Globally" effort is intended to strengthen the church's Global Mission Fund to carry out our [Witness, Mercy, Life Together](#) ministry.

To give, visit www.lcms.org/give/givingtuesday.

To learn more, visit www.lcms.org/givingtuesday.

P.S. A gift to our local congregation, Good Shepherd, would also be most welcome