



Volume 11

Concordia News

October 2016



Number 10

A newsletter for members, family, and friends of
Concordia Lutheran Church and Concordia Cemetery Association

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Occasionally someone will ask me the question, "Is there a future for the Church?" Given the aging population of most congregations this is a valid question. I was appreciative of how our bishop has responded to this question in his most recent Bible study, of which the following is an excerpt.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce



Questions like these are asked quite often nowadays, usually in the face of statistics that suggest the church is a lost cause: losing members, losing purpose, losing energy, losing ground. The future of the church seems to be in doubt.

But like most vital questions, we need to parse this question thoughtfully in order to respond to it truthfully. So let me suggest a paradoxical twofold response:

- The Church will live forever, because it is the Church of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ—indeed, it is the very Body of Christ, who has death behind him.
- The church in all of its institutional forms and historical manifestations has always been and will always be dying and rising again (i.e. changing!)—in order to serve God's mission in every time and place.

The Church that cannot be destroyed

When we find ourselves fretting about the future of the Church, we best remember first that we have Christ's own rock-solid promise that "the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). Our Lutheran church also clearly teaches that "one holy church will remain forever." (Augsburg Confession, Article VII)[\[1\]](#)

What exactly is this indestructible Church? Martin Luther, in one of his most tender phrases, wrote: "God be praised, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is: holy believers and 'the little sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd.'" (Smalcald Articles, part 3, section 12, "Concerning the Church"). The same article of the Augsburg Confession quoted above goes on to declare: "The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. And it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere."

The Church that will endure forever is, at its core, the gathering of believers who hear God's Word, celebrate Baptism, are fed at the Table, and sent out for witness and service in the world. We might say that the indestructible Church is the Church viewed from the vantage point of its bare essentials: Word, water, bread, wine and a community of believers that regularly gather in order to be scattered in the world.

When I was growing up I learned to spell this Church with a capital "C." I was taught that this is the Church that cuts across all time and space, encompassing all sorts of Christian gatherings, assemblies and groupings. Sometimes this Church was referred to as the "Invisible Church." Later when I was in seminary, I was invited to think of this Church not as invisible/visible, but rather as **hidden/revealed**. Something that is invisible cannot be seen—and that is not the case with God's indestructible Church. Although often hidden from our eyes (in all its fullness), this Church does regularly make an appearance, i.e. it is revealed to us in moments when we see, hear, taste and feel the Body of Christ among us: through Word, water, bread, wine and the faces of fellow believers.

COFFEE AT 9 A.M. – WORSHIP AT 10 A.M. EVERY SUNDAY

Message from Pastor Bruce

All of which is to say that the Church that will endure forever is—like God and the Gospel itself—an **object of faith**. This is not to diminish the reality of the Church—far from it! To confess that we “believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church” (Nicene Creed) is to declare that this Church is “realer than real,” because in Christ, faith “is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1)

We can scarcely imagine how astonishingly vast this Church is. It gathers up all believers in space and time. One of the ways we sometimes talk about that is to refer to Church as both “militant” and “triumphant.” The Church Militant is the collection of sinner/saints who are alive on earth right now; the Church Triumphant includes all the sinner/saints who have died and now live in the fullness of God’s own life. Whether or not we’re aware of it, we experience that whenever we come to Holy Communion acknowledging that we do so in deep fellowship with “the church on earth and the hosts of heaven” who are forever singing: “Holy, holy holy...!”

The church that is continually being made new

Given the ways I’ve been describing the indestructible Church of Jesus Christ, you might well wonder why it is so easy to have doubts about the church’s **unity** (“one”), **sanctity** (“holy”), **universality** (“catholic”) and **faithfulness in serving God’s mission** (“apostolic”).

The most basic reason is that the church that we experience on a daily basis (spelled with a lower-case “C”) is just chock full of sinners! Again we turn to the Augsburg Confession: “Although the church is, properly speaking, the assembly of saints and those who truly believe, nevertheless...in this life many hypocrites and evil people are mixed in with them...” (Article VIII).

In truth, **all** members of the church that we see “in this life” are, in Luther’s famous formula, *simul justus et peccator*, i.e. “at the same time saints and sinners.” Another way of saying this is that church is always both *a finished project* (because of God’s dependable promises) and a *work-in-progress* (because of God’s unflagging work of calling, gathering and sanctifying the church).

One of the things our sinfulness does to us is to stunt our vision—leading us to focus on just one part or one aspect of the church. When that happens we get distracted by elements of the church that are not at its foundational core (the Word, sacraments and gathered/scattered Christian community). In fact, I find that most “church fights” or conflicts are about non-essentials like how the church is *structured* or *governed* or *deployed* for witness and service in the world.

To the degree that this happens, we reveal how far afield we have come from our biblical and Lutheran confessional center as the people of God. Part of the genius of our Lutheran way of being Christian is that we focus tightly on the essentials while granting broad freedom in non-essentials. Lutherans at their best know how to “travel light.”

Not that our history as Lutherans always bears that out. Several years ago—when some of our congregations were considering disaffiliation from the ELCA—a lay leader told me he had discovered that there are 37 different Lutheran church bodies in North America! How could that be, given the fact that all of those Lutheran groups claim to be centered in gatherings of believers, around the Word and sacraments? Although there certainly have been doctrinal disputes among Lutherans, much of what divides us involves issues of ethnicity, the mother-tongues of our forebears, styles of worship, ways of reading and applying the Bible, opinions on moral or political issues, modes of governing the church, attitudes toward the service of both men and women in the church— not to mention differences in culture and even cuisine.

Why should we care about all of this? The main reason is that **misunderstanding the differences between essentials and non-essentials in the church can hold us back from serving God faithfully and fruitfully in today’s world.**

Right now in our Northwestern Minnesota Synod I regularly engage with

- Congregations reluctant to cooperate with neighboring congregations;
- Multi-point parishes unraveling because of silly spats among neighbors;
- Faith communities focused so tightly on “gathering” that they virtually neglect “scattering” in witness and service;
- Local churches that have long passed the point of institutional viability but are unwilling even to discuss the possibility of closing—saying ‘mission accomplished!’

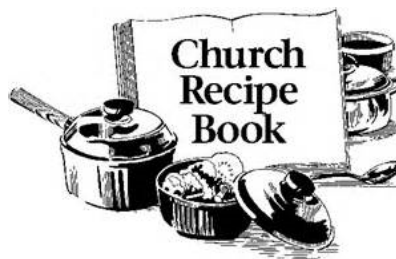
In my experience, most of these sorts of situations involve, to one degree or another, a misunderstanding of what the Church actually is and a tendency to equate some part or aspect of the local church with the totality of the Church.

My dear friends, it is God’s good pleasure to give us the *gift* of the Church. Within this one holy catholic apostolic Church the Holy Spirit is forever *calling, gathering, enlightening, sanctifying and sending* sinner-saints out into the world for the sake of God’s mission.



Coffee and Cookie Servers

October 2 Irene Olson
 October 9 Germaine Gress
 October 16 Becky Jegtvig
 October 23 Polly Hanson
 October 30 Randy & Deb Myhre
 November 6 Regina Hanson
 November 13 Delores Hagene
 November 20 Linda Koester
 November 27 Doris Kassenborg



Please contribute your recipes for our cookbook. The **deadline** for submitting them is **November 1**. You can either bring them to

church and give them to Kathy, Sue, Polly or Barb, or send them to Barb via e-mail at mgrover1424@gmail.com. Please use the TAHOMA font if e-mailing them.

You can also mail them directly to the church:
 Concordia Lutheran Church
 6637 80th Ave. N. Glyndon, MN 56547
 Attn: cookbook



Bible Study

5:30-7:00 p.m.
 Wednesday
 October 5

Concordia Ladies

1:30 p.m. October 11
 Fryn' Pan, Moorhead



Join the Romeos!

Retired Old Men Eating Out
 7:30 a.m., October 28

In October, the subject in Kids Corner is "Justification by Faith." Kids Corner is located in the Congregation section of the website.



How it works: If you have a prayer request you wish to share, call the Prayer Chain. Start by calling the first person on the list below. If there is no answer, try the

second name, and so on. Give your message and ask that it be shared. That person will pass the message on to the next person on the list, and so on.

1. Ella – 233-4154
2. Osie – 233-5906
3. Barb – 233-4280
3. Regina – 233-8443
4. Doris K. – 233-7238
5. Harold/Sally-233-7201
6. Mavis – 233-5463
7. Polly – 233-8622
8. Orpha – 287-3774
9. Sylvia – 236-6693
10. Kathy – 329-2246
11. Lloyd – 287-8707
12. Irene – 277-8819
13. Jerry Hagene -701-261-4234

Pastoral Care

If you know of someone in the hospital or in need of a home visit, contact Pastor

Bruce at 218-329-2245.

Fall Dinner

Sunday, October 2
 Following worship
 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.



Daylight Savings Time Ends

**Sunday, November 6
 2 a.m.**

Turn your clocks back 1 hour before going to bed on

Saturday, November 5



Donations

Cemetery Association

In Memory of Partyke Family
Paul & Jenifer Partyke

In Memory of Sid Snartland
Phillip & Julie Snartland
Donna George

In Memory of Joan Erickson
Donald Johnson
Lloyd Gunderson



Moland Church, Fyresdal, Telemark, Norway
Photo from Kendyl Reis

Reformation Sunday is October 30



Thoughts from Martin Luther:

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.”

“Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent gifts God has given us.”

“Even if I knew

the world would go to pieces tomorrow, I would still plant my apple tree.”

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

From Minneapolis to Moland Church

By Kendyl M. Reis

Granddaughter of Becky Jegtvig

I studied in Oslo for 6 months from January until June 2016. In June, 1 week before coming back to Minnesota, my friend and I decided to take a day trip to Fyresdal in West Telemark. While in Fyresdal, I was able to visit the Moland Church. Back when our ancestors first traveled to the States, they came from the Moland/Fyresdal area of West Telemark. Words will never be able to fully describe what it felt like to stand looking at the places I knew my family had looked at over 200 years ago. The last time they looked at it, they were probably saying good—bye to the land they knew and loved.

I’m so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers!

~L M Montgomery, “Anne of Green Gables”



Leif Erikson Day

October 9

In 1960, a Viking site was identified in northern Newfoundland that predated Columbus by over 500 years: L’Anse aux Meadows. This confirmed that the stories about Leif Erikson in the Icelandic Sagas were not myth, but fact. Using satellite imagery, a second site in southern Newfoundland has been identified and is currently being studied.





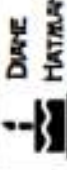






Belated Congratulations

Verne and Carol Wik
on their 60th wedding anniversary!

When witches go riding and black cats are seen,
The moon laughs and whispers...it must be Hallowe’en!



OCTOBER 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 GREEN 9 am Coffee 10 am Worship Communion FALL DINNER	3	4	5 5:30 pm Bible Study 	6	7 	8
9 GREEN 9 am Coffee 10 am Worship Leif Eriksen Day 	10	11 1:30 pm Concordia Ladies 	12	13	14	15
16 GREEN 9 am Coffee 10am Worship	17	18  PAUL & KAROLYNN DECKER	19	20  Newsletter Deadline	21	22  LLOYD CUNDERSON
23 GREEN 9 am Coffee 10 am Worship	24	25	26	27	28 7:30 ROMEOs 	29
30 RED 9 am Coffee 10 am Worship	31 Hallowe'en 					

Concordia Lutheran Church/Cemetery Association

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October 2016

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**To submit articles, recipes, announcements,
etc.**

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Mail: Sylvia Teigen
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Moorhead MN 56560

Submission deadline is the 20th of the month

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