

Concordia News – Large Print

October 2016

Volume 11

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

Number 10

ISSN 2152-3339



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From Pastor Bruce

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)

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.

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;

From Pastor Bruce

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



BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, October 5

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Concordia Ladies



Date: Tuesday, October 11

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: Fryn' Pan

Join the ROMEOs!

Retired Old Men Eating Out

7:30 a.m. Friday, October 28 - Fryn' Pan



Announcements and Assignments



If you know of someone who is in the hospital or would like a home visit please let me know. I can be reached at 218-329-2245.

Thank you! *Pastor Bruce*

The lesson for Kid's Corner in October is "Justification by Faith." Kid's Corner is located in the congregation section of our website.



Daylight Savings Time Ends

Sunday, November 6 at 2 a.m.

Turn your clocks back 1 hour

before going to bed on

Saturday, November 5

Fall Dinner

Sunday, October 2

Following worship

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

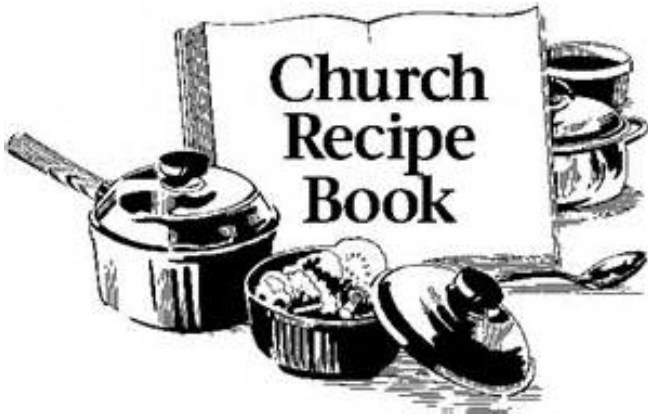




How it works: If you have a prayer request you wish to share, call the Prayer Chain. Start by calling the first person on the list below. If there is no answer, try the second name, and so on. Give your

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



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

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.



With Our Thanks
Donations

Concordia Cemetery Fund

In Memory of the Partyke Family

Paul & Jenifer Partyke

In Memory of Sid Snartland

Phillip & Julie Snartland

Donna George

In Memory of Joan Erickson

Donald Johnson

Lloyd Gunderson



Belated Congratulations

Verne and Carol Wik

on their 60th wedding anniversary!

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

~L M Montgomery, "Anne of Green Gables"





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.”

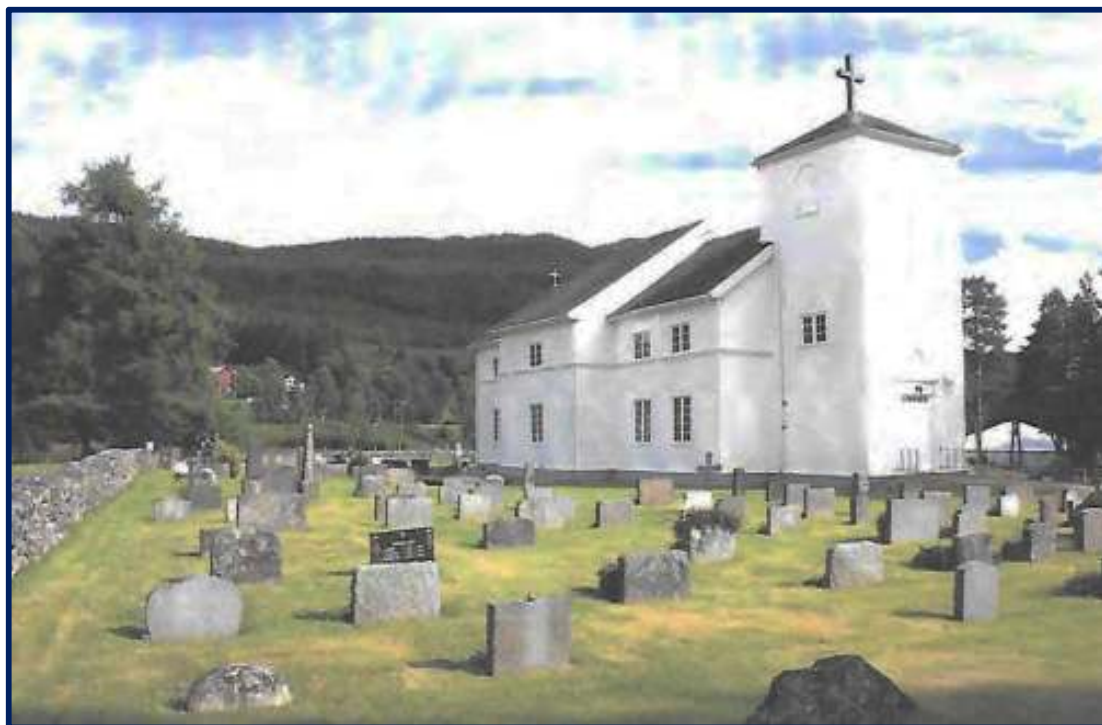
“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

“To gather with God’s people in united adoration of the Father is as necessary to the Christian life as prayer.”

“You are not just responsible for what you say, but for what you do not say.”

“Nothing good ever comes from violence.”

“True humility does not know it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue.”



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.

Dates to Remember

Worship Services every Sunday

Coffee Hour: 9 a.m. Worship: 10 a.m.

Communion 1st Sunday of the month

Bible Study 5:30 p.m., Wednesday October 5

Concordia Ladies 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 11

ROMEOS 7:30 a.m., Friday, October 28

Reformation Sunday October 30

Birthdays

October 7 Jane Bekkerus

October 9 Diane Hatman

October 22 Lloyd Gunderson

Anniversaries

October 18 Paul and Karolynn Decker

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ISSN 2152-3339

The large print edition of Concordia News is only available on-line.

To submit an item for the newsletter:

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Concordia News is published monthly by Concordia Lutheran Church and Concordia Cemetery Association.

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