

From Pastor's desk...

May 2021

Dear Fellow-Redeemed of Zion,

It never ceases to amaze me at how often I forget that God is still in control of all things. Confirmands learn the "attributes of God" as He has oversight and management of all things He has created. (Some of you may remember a saying of Pr. Bob Kuhn, "I am not in management, I am in sales.")

What Pastors wish to "sell" is the comfort of knowing that He promises to be with us always, "Even to the very end of the age."

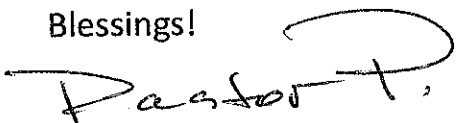

Now, we can put things into a better perspective, no matter what might be happening in the world around us. That is why Christians need not despair as the culture declines, or the government does this or that. However, we are called upon to uphold God's Word and will in all things, from His superintendency of all creation, to His good and gracious will as it affects us and everyone else.

And how does it affect us? With Paul, we declare, "For we know that all things work together for our good" in due time. We know "whom we have believed, that He is able, to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that Day." And what is that day? It is the day He returns when the resurrection of all flesh becomes a grand reality. "Because He (Christ) is risen, we too, shall rise."

Whatever the days bring here, we know how the story ends, or rather, how the chapter ends, and the eternal one begins. Yes, Christians may suffer many things in this life, but without doubt, the suffering is temporary!

May the blessings of the crucified and risen Christ bring us comfort every day!
He's got this!

Blessings!

Dear Zion Lutheran Church members,

Because Jesus lives, we will live also. The Apostle Paul writes:

*Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.
(Romans 6:8-9)*

Thank you for your support of Issues, Etc. and our message of Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the devil.

May the crucified and risen Jesus comfort and strengthen you with His imperishable Life!



Todd Wilken, Host

Me? In Church Work?

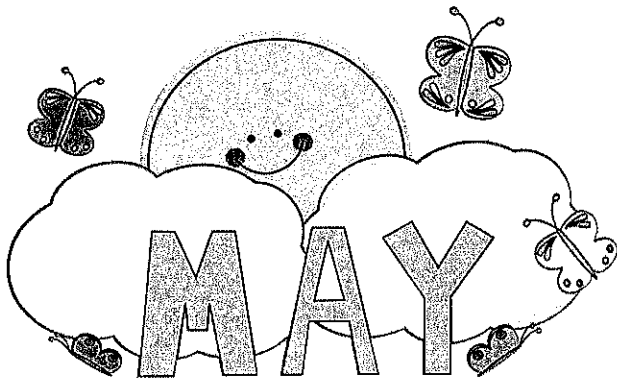
Our Lord said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). These words remain as applicable today as when Jesus first spoke them. *Ora et labora!* We pray, and we work too.

CID's Shelby, Effingham, and Altamont Circuits are doing just that. On Pentecost, Sunday, May 23, they will hold a joint Circuit Convocation at St. John Lutheran Church in Effingham from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. The topic is church worker recruitment. Recruitment of pastors will be emphasized, but also including teachers, Directors of Christian Education, Deaconesses, and others.

The convocation's keynote speaker will be Dr. Dale Meyer, former Lutheran Hour Speaker and recently retired President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Representatives will be present from our Synod's two seminaries and from the Concordia Universities in Chicago and Mequon, Wisconsin. Chaplain Craig Muehler from LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and Pastor Josh Theilen from Camp CILCA will provide information on specialized ministries.

Here is a great opportunity for young people, even pre-teens, to come and learn about full-time church work, and for their parents to learn about the educational roads to such careers. The convocation also affords prospective second-career pastors a place to ask serious questions and get some answers. Please help spread the word about the convocation! See the video at <https://youtu.be/gpHTOEcWpAU>

Please register for the convocation by
May 7 at www.stjohnsLCMS.net/harvest



Celebrations

Birthdays

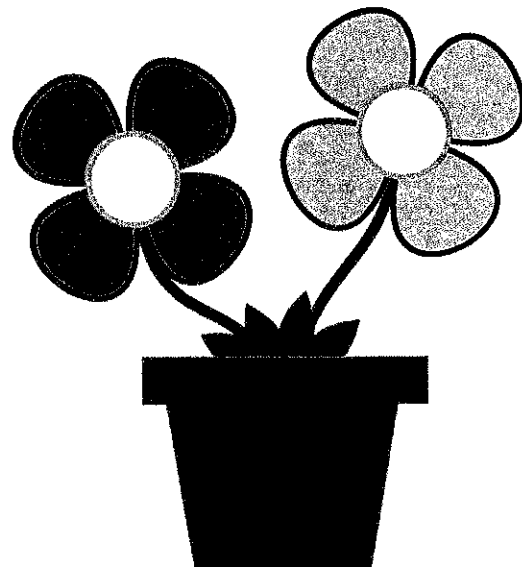
Paul Zerkel	5/1
Anna Thompson	5/5
Ember Wieland	5/5
Marie Braker	5/10
Dawn Zerkel	5/10
Grace Bowen	5/11
Joyce TeRonde	5/18
Nash Van Veldhuizen	5/18
Ali Van Veldhuizen	5/23
Shannon Sparling	5/24
Mason Curry	5/25
Stacy Stremsterfer	5/27
Brooklyn Wieland	5/27
Carol Kiel	5/29

Baptism Birthday's

Skylor Bowman	5/10
Katrina Mahler	5/10
Barb Hand	5/11
Tristen Tewes	5/12
Lloyd Fraase	5/16
Landon Durham	5/17
Sierra Shea Brandt	5/21
Paul Zerkel	5/23
Ember Wieland	5/27
Jeanette Ealey	5/28
Nash Van Veldhuizen	5/28
Abby Bruce	5/31
Anna Bruce	5/31
Dawn Zerkel	5/31

Wedding Anniversaries

Rev. Don & Cindy Pritchard	5/3
Lloyd & Joyce Fraase	5/19



Reason # 4

Tithing Helps Make Giving a Priority

In order to tithe, a certain amount of money must be set aside regularly to give. As we tithe, we are giving to God first rather than giving Him the leftovers after our own needs are met. Giving becomes a priority, and we are intentional in our giving rather than giving haphazardly. Solomon told us that we honor

God when we set aside His portion first. *"Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce..."* (Proverbs 3:9). In the Old Testament, this priority giving was referred to as giving your firstfruits. Moses wrote, *"The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God"* (Exodus 23:19). Firstfruits giving is illustrated in the story of the boy who gave the pastor a fish for his tithe. The pastor asked the boy, "Where are the other nine fish?" The boy responded joyfully, "I'm going back now to the river to catch them!"

Old Testament givers demonstrated their faith and trust in the Lord by giving the first portion of their crops (or the best of their flocks), trusting that God would provide the rest of the harvest. Most of us don't bring our crops or animals to church as offerings; rather we give the firstfruits of our incomes. As New Testament believers, firstfruits giving is an expression of the special relationship we have with Jesus.

God gave us His first and best when He gave His one and only Son Who gave His best, His very life, to win our salvation. As His people, we receive with gratitude and respond faithfully, generously, and joyfully. We give our firstfruits, setting aside our offerings to the Lord first before fulfilling our other obligations. Faith empowers us to give our firstfruits. When we give off the top as a priority, we confirm our trust in Him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me make giving a priority. Grant me faith to give You the first part of each check I receive. I pray that You will be glorified through my giving. In Jesus' holy and precious name I pray. Amen.



SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

[Having Trouble Viewing this Email? - View as a Webpage](#)



Romans 3:19-28

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have

Semper Reformanda

Thursday of Easter 2
15 April 2021

The Lutheran Reformation is not ever complete and never will be. Every generation must appropriate the insights of our Lutheran faith for itself. We may not rest on our Lutheran laurels, as though our faith can be bequeathed as a birthright. No, the faith must always be specifically confessed by us today, tomorrow, and until the ages come to their close at the return of Christ. Paul celebrates the benefits of the work of Christ, who is a propitiation by His blood "to show his righteousness at the present time" ([Rm 3:26](#)). God is always making present His Word to us so that we are again and again brought to repentance and given the forgiveness of sins today and every "today" hereafter.

God's Word puts us into the ever-present "now" of God's righteousness by faith. We'll always be undergoing the reformation through the Word of God functioning in our lives. We are not Lutherans because we know who Luther is or even know what he did, but because we believe and confess what he believed and confessed. We are always

sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

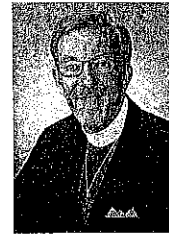
Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (ESV)

being reformed by the Word of God; saying back to God what He has already said to us in the last days by His Son and repeated on the lips of our forefathers (Heb 1:1). That constant reformation demands that we critically assess the doctrinal claims of humans by subjecting them to the Word of God. The place we must start is with our own faith and confession this day and every day.

The indispensable criterion of justification must ever cut through the clutter of our legalistic patterns of thought to bring us back to the cross of Christ. Then we will see that our righteousness is not our own, but God's own given to us by the work of Christ through faith. Luther experienced his own discovery of this before nailing the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg. Indeed, he would not have bothered writing the propositions for debate on indulgences, if justification by Christ had not driven his pen across the page.

Although sometimes the impression is given that Luther "discovered the gospel" this is not entirely true, or at least not as it is commonly understood. The gospel, though hidden in deepest darkness, had not been completely extinguished in the medieval church. No, it had lingered under the shadows there in the writings of the ancient fathers as well as on the lips of faithful preachers like Bernard of Clairvaux and even Luther's own spiritual father, John von Staupitz of the Augustinian Friars.

Luther had pondered what Paul meant by the "righteousness of God" (Rm 1:17; 3:21-22; 2Co 5:21). Most medieval interpreters presumed that the righteousness of God was the rightness that was in God and that He demanded of us. Luther rebelled against this interpretation when he realized that this righteousness of God is given as a gift to those who believe. However, Luther himself was not the first to argue this way. A millennium before his time, Augustine of Hippo argued in precisely the same way. The Reformation had made a stop in Hippo, North Africa long before Luther was even born! And so the Word of God marches on, even in our day. In the great "today" of the justifying work of God the church is ever being reformed.



Augustine of Hippo

“It might be said by human presumption, which is ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishes to establish one of its own, that the apostle Paul quite properly said, ‘For by works of the law no human being will be justified’ (Rm 3:20) inasmuch as the law merely shows what one ought to do, and guard against, in order that what the law thus points out may be accomplished by the will, and so man be justified, not indeed by the power of the law, but by his free determination. But I ask you to pay attention to what follows. ‘But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it’ (Rm 3:21). Does this sound like a light thing in deaf ears? He says, “The righteousness of God has been manifested.” Now this righteousness they are ignorant of, who wish to establish one of their own. They will not submit themselves to it (Rm 10:3). His words are, ‘The righteousness of God has been manifested.’ He does not say, ‘the righteousness of man,’ or ‘the righteousness of his own will,’ but the ‘righteousness of God.’ This is not the righteousness by which He is Himself righteous, but that with which He endows man when He justifies the ungodly (Rm 4:5). This is witnessed by the law and the prophets; in other words, the law and the prophets testify to it.

“Truly, the law by issuing its commands and threats, and by justifying no man, sufficiently shows that it is by God's gift, through the help of the Spirit, that a man is justified. The prophets predicted what Christ at His coming accomplished. Accordingly Paul advances a step further, and adds, ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ (Rm 3:22), that is by the faith by which one believes in Christ. Just as Paul does not mean the faith by which Christ Himself believes, so also he does not mean the righteousness by which God is Himself righteous.

Both no doubt are ours, but yet they are called God's and Christ's, because it is by their generosity that these gifts are bestowed on us. The righteousness of God then is without the law, but not manifested without the law; for if it were manifested without the law, how could it be witnessed by the law? This righteousness of God, however, is without the law, which God by the Spirit of grace bestows on the believer without the help of the law.

“When, indeed, He by the law reveals to a man his weakness, it is in order that by faith he might flee for refuge to His mercy and be healed... Therefore, ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Rm 3:22-23). This is not about human glory. For ‘what do you have that you did not receive’ (1Co 4:7)? Now if they received it, why do they boast as if they had not received it (1Co 4:7)? Well, then, they come short of the glory of God. Now observe what follows: They are justified by his grace as a gift (Rm 3:24). It is not, therefore, by the law, nor is it by their own will that they are justified; but they are justified freely by His grace. And it is not that this happens apart from our will; our will is by the law shown to be weak, that grace may heal its infirmity.”

**Augustine, On the Spirit and the Letter,
15**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You give Your Word to Your church every day and in it You call us to repent and to trust in the merit of Your blood. Constantly grant us the spirit of the Reformation, that we might never presume upon the faith once delivered to the saints, but appropriate it, confess it, trust it, and share it every day, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

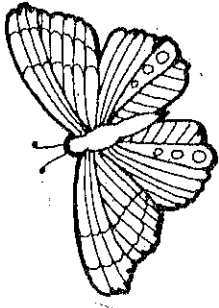
For those who are struggling under worldly burdens, that they might not become weary in well doing as they await the presence of God

For Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, that he might be upheld in every good deed and snatched from the clutches of the enemy of Christ

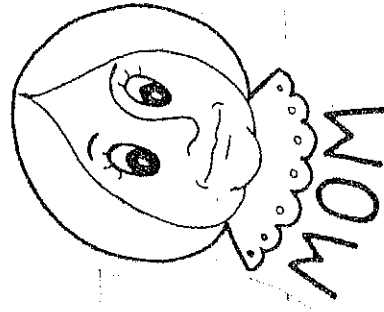
For faithful pastors everywhere, that they might confess Christ today and that they would be strengthened to face the intimidation of the enemies of the church



May 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service with Communion 10:15 A.M. April Quarterly Voter's Meeting Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	26	27	28	29	30	1
2 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service 10:15 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	3	4	5 Pre-Marriage Counseling 11:00 A.M.	6	7	8 Mother's Day Breakfast at St. John's, Bath
9 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service with Communion 10:15 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. Mother's Day	10	11	12 Pastor at Troopers Lodge 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.	13	14	15
16 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service 10:15 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	17	18	19	20	21	22 Wedding at Clayville 2:00 P.M.
23 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service with Communion 10:15 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	24	25	26 June Newsletter articles due	27 Church Council 6:45 P.M.	28	29
30 Adult Bible Study 9:00 A.M. Divine Service with Communion 10:15 A.M. Confirmation Class 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.	31 Memorial Day	Notes: Elder Dennis Boesdorfer				



Zion's Newsletter
May, 2021

Zion Lutheran Church
Rev. Don Pritchard
525 North Cartwright
P.O. Box 167
Pleasant Plains, IL 62677
(217) 626-1282

Adult Bible Class 9:00 A.M.
Divine Service 10:15 A.M.

LCMS

Email: zionpp@casscomm.com
Website: www.zionpp.net