



St. Luke Lutheran Church
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Open doors, open hearts, open minds.

Parish Times May 2018

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105

Every one of the gospel readings for May comes from the Gospel of John. John was Martin Luther's favorite gospel and I love it too. I have found that the deeper you dive into the Gospel of John, the deeper you go into the mysteries and beauty of God. It's breathtaking. If you take the time to read John slowly and meditatively, you will find many pearls of great price. As I wrote and rewrote the commentaries for the Sunday gospel readings from the Gospel of John this month, I had to deliberately limit myself on what to write. There is so much there! Please take a look. In the first commentary, you will see deeper meanings being made by such words as, "as" "so" "if" and "just as". These are often words we simply read over without a thought, but I would like you to give each word your undivided attention and there find new meaning and inspiration. If you really take the time, you will find yourself blessed. Be blessed my friend. Take the time to let the Scripture truly be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.

Pr. Dave



The Gertens bedding plants/flowers will be available for pick up on Friday, May 18, 5pm to 7pm, and Sunday, May 20, after worship. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



May Acolytes

6 Victor Landenberger
20 Tatum Herrmann

Heartfelt thanks to our May **Bun Run** volunteers: Doug and Jo Klein, Larry Litzkow, Julie and Eric Ellingson, Mike Hegdahl.



Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for May: Dave Grzywinski, Judy Salaba, David Tews, Mike and Nancy Hegdahl, Linda Funkhouser, Roger Diestler.



Ladies' Night Out in May will take place on Tuesday, May 15th at TGI Friday, 2201 Killebrew Drive, Bloomington at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in carpooling, please meet at church at 5:00 p.m. Please notify Joyce Bluel (651-690-4614) by May 13th if you are planning on attending so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.

May WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Readers:

6 Laurie Herrmann
13 Jeff Kingsley
20 Cindy Schroer
27 Joyce Bluel

Communion:

6 Wendy Bjorklund
20 Cindy Schroer



May Birthdays

1 Jodi Landenberger
3 Alivia Mathis
4 Michael Amundson
6 Reginald Czech
9 Kent Peterson
10 Maleah Mathis
11 Ian Holmly
12 Julie Ellingson
18 Katy Eggert, Larry Litzkow
21 Dan Vigdal, MaryJo Brandt
22 Lucy Pilgrim
26 Kayla Stadem
28 Patricia Stadem, Sue Palm



May Anniversaries

11 Robert and Lois Porter: 1968
22 Dan and Deborah Vigdal: 1971
30 Tom and Julie Gaarder: 1992



110 hungry men, women and children enjoyed a delicious meal at **Loaves and Fishes** on Monday March 26th at St. Matthew's Catholic church. Workers from St. Luke were Pastor Dave Person, Larry Litzkow, Joyce Bluel, Verdel Humburg and Roger and Dianne Diestler.

congregational meeting



Mark the Date: Sunday, May 6th is our Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting following worship. We need and value your input...please plan on participating.

SAVE THE DATE for Pr. Dave's retirement party which will be Sunday, June 10th right after our service. More details to follow. Come one, come all!

Looking for a good home for a ping pong table, in good condition, but no longer used and no place to store. This table was purchased with Fall Bazaar funds years ago to be used by our church youth group during lock-ins. It hasn't been used now for several years. If you or someone you know could use this in their home game room, please contact Joyce Bluel (651-690-4614). The net may need to be replaced, but otherwise it is in good condition, folds up and has wheels that makes moving it easy. We are offering it to our church family and friends first, but if we have no takers, we will open it up to the public.



Wednesday Morning Bible study

We are studying a variety of books of the Bible every Wednesday morning from 10-11 a.m. We began by diving into The Book of Hebrews and I John, with wide-open discussions. We are now (as of this writing) swimming around in I Timothy and have already had some good, deep discussions in just the first few verses. Come join us to share and learn.



St. Luke's Farmers' Market

Get ready because we are gearing up for the fourth year of our farmers market. We are already working hard to make it even better than last year through more vendors and greater publicity. We will need help throughout the summer, so please put it on your checklist to help out at least one Saturday this year. Sign-up sheet is on kiosk; we need 2 volunteers every Saturday, **PLEASE SIGN UP TODAY.** We begin on Saturday, June 16 and will run through Saturday, October 6. The times are 8 a.m. to noon. Please help get out the word and plan on serving at the market. It is a beautiful way to serve our neighborhood and welcome people to our church.



Two Labyrinth related events at St. Luke!

- 1) Join your Highland Park neighbors and friends outside to Walk As One At One on Saturday, May 5, 2018 at 1 p.m. Learn about this "prayer path," how to draw one on paper, and walk the labyrinth created at National Night Out last August. Invite others to this local World Labyrinth Day event. Contact Conie with questions at labyrinths@pointsoflightmusic.net or 612-756-8011.
- 2) The Minnesota Labyrinth Network will be having their May meeting at St. Luke on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 1-4 p.m. We'll walk the parking lot labyrinth and experience the quilted interactive labyrinth of Suzi McNamara. Meet other labyrinth enthusiasts and hear about their projects. Open to anyone.



Musings from the Music Director

The choir season is winding down and I would just like to say a gigantic THANK YOU to all my choir members! Thanks for your participation, your time, your patience, your support and all the work you put into our music - whether you were ringing or singing! It is a joy to work with all of you and it is a highlight of my week. I'm kicking the Hymn Sings back into high gear! Join us on May 20th at 8:40 for another fun time to sing and learn together! Everyone is welcome to come sing or play or listen.

Becca Ruiz

Commentaries on May Gospel Readings

For the commentaries on the gospels this month, I mainly used "Working Preacher" commentaries by Dr. James Boyce, along with my own notes. Open your Bibles and read the Gospel along with the commentary. Take time for quiet prayer and contemplation is preparation for Sunday worship.

May 6, John 15:9-17

This is a continuation of the gospel text from last week, which stressed the relationship of abiding in Jesus, the true vine. It is through our relationship with Jesus, the true vine, that we, the branches are able to bear much fruit. Without the vine, we wither and die. In this

continuation, we see that when we abide in Jesus, we abide in his love. How many times do you see the word "love" in these verses? It has a strong relationship to bearing fruit through and in Christ. (In relation to this you might read I Corinthians 12:31-13:13 in which Paul is talking about the gifts (fruits) of the Spirit. Which is the greatest gift?) Another important point is found in the small words, "as" "so" "if" "just as". Through these words we see the connection between Jesus and the Father as well as between Jesus and us. They point to the sharing of ALL things. Here is verse 9: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love." If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." The love of Jesus mirrors or reflects God's love. In fact Jesus said to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). And if you read John 1:1, you understand that Jesus and God are one. In the same way Jesus mirrors God's love, he calls on us to mirror or reflect his love. How do we do that? We do it by abiding in him, through a relationship with Jesus. We build on that relationship through worship, prayer, study of the Scripture, fellowship with other Christians and living out our faith in action. When we do this, we experience the joy of our Lord, which makes our joy whole or complete (15:11). We are to live out Jesus' commandments as he lived out God's commandments (15:10). Jesus tells us that this commandment is to love one another as he has loved us (15:12). This is what we ourselves are to mirror in our lives. That deep love of God is further revealed in 13 in which Jesus speaks of the love he will demonstrate on the cross for the disciples and all people. He will give his life for them (us). This self-giving love of Jesus grants us a new status, transforming us from being mere servants or followers, to being called a friend by our Lord and Savior! We also see that it is Jesus who chooses us and makes us his own, just as he called us (15) and appointed us (16). Jesus, the Son of God has done all of this in love for us. Jesus calls on us to pray, giving us whatever we ask in his name, with the understanding that what we ask is ultimately determined not by self-serving greed, but for love of one another.

May 13, John 17:6-19

This section of the Gospel of John, beginning with 17:1ff, is Jesus' prayer for his disciples....then and now. Jesus prays for you! Too often we think of prayer as that which I do, from me to God. But here we see Jesus prays for us too. Let that be a strong support for you through good *and* bad times. Jesus prays for you (also see Luke 22:31-32). As we listen in on Jesus' prayer many things can be noted. In verse six we see the word "gave" used twice. "Give" is used nine times in this short part of the prayer. It is used a total of 75 times in the Gospel of John. Over and over we see all that is given us by the Father and the Son. As one commentator said, in John we see the extravagant giving of the Father and the Son. As with the gospel last week, we also see the "just as" theology of John, of Jesus sharing the gifts of the Father with us just as he received them from God the Father. Paul states this in a little different way in Ephesians 1:3 when he writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Did you get that?? Through Jesus we have been blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly places! All of them!! Talk about EXTRAVAGANT giving!! Meditate on that! How do we know that this extravagant gift is for us? We know because as Jesus says, the Father has given them (us) to Jesus. We are God's beloved children, for he has chosen us (check out the gospel from last week). We have also been given knowledge of God's name (6, 11, 12). When you know a name, you have access to that person. Through Jesus, we have access to God the Father and we are sanctified (17), protected (15) and guarded (12) by the power of that name, the Name of our Father the Creator and Sustainer of all! Through Jesus we have also received the Word (in fact Jesus IS the Word made flesh – John 1:1, 14). This is the word of power (all creation was made through the Word – read the first chapter of Genesis) and this Word gives us the power to become children of God (1:12-13). In this passage we also see the "world" mentioned over and over. Here we see (as is often depicted

in John) that the world stands in opposition to God. Jesus prays that we may be protected from the world. It is also important to note that in one of the most famous verses of the Bible, John 3:16, it states that God so loved the world that he GAVE his only Son. Once again, we see extravagant giving, EVEN for that which rejects and hates God! Yet even though the world rejects God, God the Father LOVES the world and GIVES the son! It is an extravagant gift we receive and are called to reflect (mirror) in our daily lives.

May 20, John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

This is the Sunday of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. In our gospel Jesus tells about the coming of the Holy Spirit, which he calls "the Advocate." The Greek word for Advocate is *paraclete* which literally means, "the one called to your side." The Holy Spirit is *the one called to your side*! The Holy Spirit is with you and walks with you! I am also reminded of Matthew 1:23 which gives Jesus the name of Immanuel, which means, "God with us." I am again reminded of Genesis 2:7 when God formed Adam from the dirt and breathed life into him. The word for "breath" here also means "spirit" and "wind." (Just like the Greek word *pneuma* in the Nicodemus story). God the Father is as close to you as your breath! Jesus is God with you!! And the Holy Spirit is the one called to your side!! The Lord God is not in some faraway place, rather the Lord is as close as your breath and right at your side, walking with you! Jesus tells his disciples of the coming of the Advocate to comfort and reassure them. Soon he will be gone, but they will not be left alone. In these opening verses, we see Jesus talking very plainly about the Trinity, the Father, Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit (Advocate). We see that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share all things (read 13-15). The Holy Spirit will gather the disciples, filling them, leading them to continue all that Jesus declared from the Father, as well as continue the extravagant giving of the Father and Son (John 3:16 as one example – also see the commentary from last week and next week). Concerning the witness of the Spirit, I will quote directly from Dr. Boyce on the Working Preacher site. He writes, "The witness of the Spirit has a two-fold focus. First focus is in the Spirit's witness on behalf of Jesus. That witness about Jesus has at least two aspects. It is a witness that the mission of the Father and the Son has indeed been completed. The cross was not some travesty or failure of God's intent. From creation nothing has happened apart from the Word (1:1-2). The Word became flesh and dwelled among us (1:14). It was necessary that the Son be "lifted up" on the cross so as to confirm the depth of the Father's love for the world (3:14-17). At the point of being lifted up, Jesus the Son declares the fulfillment of that mission: "It is finished" (19:30) A second aspect of this witness is that the Spirit gives power to the community of believers not to identify themselves as abandoned or forsaken, but rather as empowered and sent to bear witness to the world that in the events of the Son, God's love has indeed been made real and present for all the world." The Spirit will also convince the world about sin, righteousness and judgment. Jesus states that sin is a matter of belief. In this case it concerns whether or not we receive the word of Jesus as the one the Father sent into the world. In John 3:18 Jesus says, "This is the judgment, that they did not believe in the one whom God sent." One role of the Spirit is to make Christ present for us and so face us with that point of decision and faith. This reflects the theology of John in which salvation and judgment take place NOW, in the present, through the acceptance or rejection of Jesus as Lord. The Spirit also convinces us about righteousness. Righteousness has to do with living in a right relationship and following the demands of that relationship. When we see in Jesus the one who accomplished our salvation through his death and resurrection, and receive it as a gift, we also receive the gift of righteousness through Jesus. Jesus IS our righteousness (Romans 5:21 – and all of Romans up to that point and more). The Spirit also convinces us of judgment. Again I quote Dr. Boyce, "...the Spirit convinces us about judgment, and that judgment is precisely that in the actions of the Trinity the ruler of this world has been condemned (11). If there is then any judgment, that judgment has to do with all that would not believe that what God is about in the Son is to show God's love and to bring that

abundant life to those whom the Son has chosen and for whom he has given his life as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. "For God sent the Son into the world, not for the purpose of standing in judgment over the world, but in order that through him the world might be saved" (3:17)."

May 27 John 3:1-17

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. We often give Pharisees a bum rap, but many of them were very devout men who were seeking the truth. It seems Nicodemus was one who was earnestly seeking the truth. After the crucifixion, Nicodemus was one of the men who took Jesus' body down from the cross and placed it in the tomb. Nicodemus even brought along 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes to anoint the body (John 19:38). That was an expensive as well as dangerous thing to do! In today's passage, Nicodemus came at night. Can you see him sitting in the darkened room, perhaps alone with Jesus, the shadows from the candles dancing on the walls and ceiling as Jesus spoke of these mysteries! Alone with the Son of God! Imagine that! When reading this passage, one must realize that some of the key words Jesus is using have a variety of meanings. There is a play on words going on in a number of places in this passage. Nicodemus states that they know Jesus comes from God since no one can do the signs (John's word for miracles) Jesus does if they are not from God. It is then that Jesus begins one of the word plays when he says, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." In the Greek, "born from above" also has the meaning of "born again." If you follow the conversation closely, you will see that Nicodemus misunderstands, thinking Jesus is literally talking about being "born again," while Jesus is using the word to mean, "born from above." Nicodemus' misunderstanding leads him to believe that he must enter his mother's womb again (not a very pleasant thought for Nicodemus nor his mother, I am sure). Jesus continues saying that a person enters the kingdom of God by being born from above through water (most often thought of as a reference to baptism) and the Holy Spirit. Jesus then begins another play on words using the word "pneuma," which in Greek (and Hebrew) has the triple meaning of wind, breath, and spirit. In verse 8, using this word, Jesus says (you can fill in the English word), "The pneuma blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the pneuma." Nicodemus was now totally confused, even though, as we see, Jesus was comparing the wind and the Spirit; explaining that both blow where they will and we cannot control either of them. God is in control. Totally befuddled, Nicodemus asks, "How can this be?" Jesus now moves into a classical rabbinical way of explaining this, beginning with earthly things and from that, moving to heavenly things. Jesus refers to the story of the poisonous snakes found in Exodus 21:6-9. If a Hebrew was bitten by one of the snakes, he looked up at the bronze snake Moses lifted up on a pole, and was saved. Jesus then told Nicodemus that in the same way the Son of Man (Jesus) must be lifted up, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Of course, we know now that Jesus was referring to his crucifixion here, being lifted up on to the cross. Actually, the word "lifted up" also has the meaning of "exalt" or "glorify." Jesus would be lifted up and glorified on the cross. It is through the cross and resurrection that we receive salvation. In verse 16 we once again see God's extravagant giving, of his beloved Son, even for the world, which stands against him (also see the comments on verse 16 in the commentary from last week). Luther said that this verse is the gospel within the gospel, since it declared the good news of Jesus Christ in just one small verse.

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. ~Numbers 6:24