



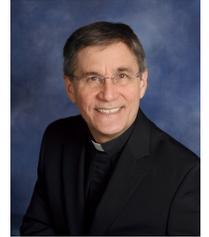
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St. Luke Lutheran Church

Open doors, open hearts, open minds.

Parish Times July 2015

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. Mark 4:26-27



The St. Luke's Farmer's Market has begun! Our farmer's market vendors have planted various vegetable and fruit seeds, which are sprouting and growing, to be sold at our market! We hope and pray that our market will be a place where people in our community can purchase high quality, healthy fruits and vegetables, as well as other food. We pray that this farmers market may be a place to draw this community together in new and beautiful ways. We pray it will be seen as a place to gather and meet neighbors. We pray that a deeper relationship between the community and St. Luke will be established and that the seeds of God's love will be shared in a variety of ways. For we are the Lord's disciples who have been called to scatter the seeds of God's love. The Lord calls you and me to do this. Let's each promise to take time to lift the prayers I mentioned above to our Lord. Let us also work together to put them into action. Let's put our minds together to think of ways we can make this market a place that not only feeds people in body, but also in soul, through God's loving word scattered like seeds among all who come. Together, with the Lord's help, let's make these prayers reality! Thanks for your partnership in the gospel.

Pr. Dave Person



Our heartfelt thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for June: Joan Wilson, Ken McGrew, Doug and Jo Klein, Julie Ellingson.



July Acolytes:
 5 Matt Brummund
 19 Maggie Erickson



Church Canoe Trip

We will be going on a great adventurous canoe trip to the BWCA, leaving the afternoon of Thursday, August 20 and returning the early evening of Monday, August 24. The cost will be approximately \$75.00 per person (a total of nine people may go – we will figure out final costs after we know the final expenses). Please sign up on the kiosk. If you have any questions, ask Pr. Dave. We will be putting in on Sawbill Lake in the BWCA!



Ladies Night Out – Ladies Night Out in July will take place on Tuesday, July 21st at Shamrock's – 995 W. 7th Street in St. Paul at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in car pooling, please meet at church at 5:00 p.m. Please notify Judy Salaba (651-698-8572) if you are planning on attending by Sunday, July 12th so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.



**HAPPY
 4TH OF JULY**



What do you know about Micro-lending?

Did you know that the St. Luke micro-lending meetings have made micro-loans to 178 people in 46 different countries since we began? We have lent out a total of \$19,200 in the years since we started this program! That is because we loan money out, it is repaid, we loan it out again, it is repaid and so on. Because of this, the initial gifts we received from members for this program (no monies are taken out of the general fund) have blessed people over and over and over...and will continue blessing people as we go forward! Come join us the next time we meet for a delicious meal, great fellowship and the chance to make a huge difference in people's lives.

Farmer's Market at St. Luke



THE ST. LUKE FARMERS MARKET IS UP AND RUNNING, EVERY SATURDAY THRU SEPT. 26, 8am to 12pm! (Excluding July 4.) Come join us, and invite your neighbors! We are very grateful for all your support thus far. But more help is needed in the weeks to come. PLEASE, can you pitch in? This is a fantastic outreach opportunity for our congregation...let's make this happen, folks! The sign-up sheet is on the kiosk. Please prayerfully consider your part...SIGN UP ASAP!

July Worship

Assistants:

Readers:

- 5 Katy Eggert
- 12 Beth Peterson
- 19 Wendy Bjorklund
- 26 Mike Hegdahl

Communion:

- 5 Katy Eggert
- 19 Wendy Bjorklund

BLOOD DRIVE, AUG. 15!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for a Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, Aug. 15, 9am to 3pm, here at St. Luke Church! Did you know a single donation can save up to three lives? You CAN make a difference! Registration will be a snap, either online or by phone. Specifics to follow in the August Newsletter. SAVE THE DATE!



American Red Cross



Ian Walter and his Nana (Nancy Hegdahl) are collecting Box Tops for his school. The bright pink Box Tops logo is on hundreds of grocery products and is easy to spot when you are walking down the grocery aisle. Please place the clippings in the marked basket on the Welcome Table. Box Tops are each worth ten cents; it adds up quickly! More info at www.boxtops4education.com. THANK YOU!



Vacation Bible School

VBS will take place on July 8-10 (Wednesday-Friday) from 5:30-8:00 pm. We will have a simple, but delicious dinner, Bible stories, crafts and games. All children from age 4 up to sixth grade are welcome! The cost is \$10.00 per child, which includes that delicious dinner. A sign up will be on the kiosk. If you can help by providing a simple meal, teaching, leading a craft or any other way, please talk with Pastor Dave.



National Night Out

St. Luke is sponsoring National Night Out for our neighborhood on Tuesday, August 4 at 6:00 p.m. Come, meet neighbors, enjoy some food and good fellowship and live music with our neighbors.



July Birthdays:

- 7 Ruth Carlson, Ian Walter
- 8 Joyce Bluel
- 9 Nancy Greatrix
- 10 Cyndy Stadem
- 11 Dave Grzywinski
- 14 Al Baird
- 15 Doug Wasko
- 16 Wendy Bjorklund
- 17 Bob And Pam Ballis
- 18 Dick Holtz
- 20 Peter Klein, Dallas Erickson
- 23 Jo Klein
- 26 Jill Burchill. Tatum Herrmann
- 27 Jennifer Kroschel
- 28 Dan Grzywinski
- 30 Jason Woodford



July Anniversaries:

- 6 Kevin And MaryJo Brandt: 1991
- 13 Larry and Bev Eckstrom: 2001
- 19 Richard And Paula Siltberg: 1975
- 26 Dave And Sandy Grzywinski: 1980

The farmers market at St. Luke is every Saturday, 8am to 12pm, mid June thru early September. (Excluding July 4.) Here is a recipe to get you inspired. Enjoy!



STUFFED RED PEPPERS

Ingredients

- 6 large (8-ounce) red bell peppers
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups onions, chopped
- 6 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2/3 cup cooked white rice, cooled
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 1/2 cups canned tomato sauce
- 1 1/4 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 large egg

Directions

Cut off top 1/2-inch of peppers and reserve. Remove seeds from the peppers. Throw stems and slice pepper tops. Heat oil in heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, garlic, parsley and chopped pepper pieces. Sauté until onions begin to soften; about 8 minutes. Transfer ingredients to large bowl. Add and mix rice, paprika, salt, pepper and allspice. Cool for 10 minutes. Add tomato sauce, beef and egg to mixture and mix. Fill peppers with beef mixture. Stand the filled peppers in heavy large pot in single layer. Pour rest of tomato sauce around peppers. Bring sauce to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for about 20 minutes. Pour some sauce over each pepper. Cover and cook until peppers are tender (about 20 minutes). Serves 6.

*To be a Christian without
prayer is no more possible
than to be alive
without breathing.
- Martin Luther*



Usher Notes

Many thanks to our ushers for June: Eva Mac Niven, Jim Kroschel, Doug Nelson, Wanda Mathison, Larry and Carol Vigdal, Pam Ballis, Katy Eggert. Our ushers for July will be: Roger Diestler, Doug Klein, Pete Klein, Joan Wilson, Bruce Magnuson, George Heriot, Rob Herrmann

FINANCE UPDATE:

- General Fund Receipts.....May: \$15,119.40 YTD: \$64,769.40
- General Fund Expenses...May: \$12,415.88 YTD: \$61,864.25

Commentaries for the July Sunday Gospel Readings.

Please take out your Bible, read the gospel for the day, then the commentary. Please take your time, do it slowly, prayerfully. Let yourself be immersed in God's Word. Please begin on Monday and think and pray about the gospel as you prepare for Sunday worship.

July 5: Mark 6:1-13

Jesus returned to his childhood hometown of Nazareth. He went to the synagogue to teach and everyone was amazed! They were astounded by his wisdom and the amazing miracles he was doing. We see these accolades in the first two verses, but from verse 3 we see a sudden shift. "Is not this the carpenter..." A carpenter in those days had a low social status, a mere laborer...how could such a one do all of this?? It must be some sort of scam! Not only that, but he is Mary's boy! This may have carried a stigma with it...remember...she was pregnant with Jesus before she and Joseph were married! Perhaps the tongues began to click with disapproval. They took offense at him, in effect saying, "Who does he think he is, a mere carpenter, barely 30 years old, the son of Mary to boot?!" Remember too that in Mark 3:21 Jesus' own family tried to restrain him because they thought he had "gone out of his mind." People didn't know what to make of Jesus. This is an ongoing question throughout the Gospel of Mark, that is, who do people say that Jesus is (6:14-16; 8:27-30)? This is also asked of us as we read Mark, who do YOU say that Jesus is? We find a surprising note in verses 5 and 6, which reads, "And he (Jesus) could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief." Why couldn't Jesus do "a deed of power" there? Does his ability to heal or do miracles depend upon people's faith? We can see that isn't the case in the exorcism stories in Mark 1:21-28 and 5:1-20. We see other examples in Mark where faith is not mentioned at all in a healing story, or it takes place thanks to the faith of a family member (like Jairus in Mark 5:21-43). Sometimes we find someone, such as the father of the possessed boy who says, "I believe, help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24) There are also healing stories in which Jesus declares that faith has made them well, such as the woman with the hemorrhage (Mark 5:21-34). Faith in Jesus leads to healing and new life, but on the other hand, God is greater than our unbelief. God, and the power of God are central. Without the Lord, nothing can happen no matter how strong or weak our faith may be. After this Jesus goes out among the villages teaching. He then sent out his disciples two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits. They were given the ability to heal people! They were to travel simply, with few possessions to weigh them down. They were to stay in the first place they were welcomed. Perhaps Jesus said this so they wouldn't switch from house to house depending on the comforts offered. "Hey, that house has better beds and food! Let's leave this place and stay there!" No, they were to gratefully receive the hospitality offered by the first people who took them in and stay there. They were to concentrate on their mission rather than finding a comfortable place to stay. So the disciples went out, preaching repentance (turning to God), cast out demons, anointed the sick with oil and cured them. You would think that after Jesus gave them these abilities, they would have unwavering belief in him...but as we continue to read, we see that they continued to waver. It wasn't until later...that they got it. When was that? Continue reading, especially the Book of Acts (after the Gospel of John), to find out more.

July 12: Mark 6:14-29

We begin with King Herod. Actually, he was not a king, but a "tetrarch," which is a ruler of one quarter of the kingdom. This Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee. Formally, the whole kingdom was ruled by his father, Herod the Great. Herod the Great is the one who tried to kill the baby Jesus by slaughtering all of the children under age 2 in and around Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18). Herod the Great and his sons served as rulers of the Jewish kingdom, under the thumb of Rome. They kept the peace or they were out! They were Jews, but their main allegiance was to Rome and power. Because he was a Jew, Herod was very interested in John the Baptist and this man called "Jesus." There were various rumors circulating about Jesus and who he was. We see this same list of people brought up again in Mark 8:27-29 when Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" Some say John the Baptist raised from the dead. Others thought Elijah. In fact, it was said that Elijah would come again to usher in the Messiah. Speaking to this, read what Jesus says about John the Baptist and Elijah in Mark 9:11-13 and Matthew 17:9-13 (read them both). Others thought Jesus was one of the prophets of old. It seems this list was circulating widely at that time. But it was Peter who stated it correctly in Mark 8:29. Back to Herod...he had John the Baptist arrested because John told Herod forthrightly that it was wrong for him to marry his brother's wife, Herodias. In fact, Herod divorced his first wife so that he could marry Herodias. It seems John the Baptist minced no words in telling Herod and Herodias that this was wrong. Herodias didn't like hearing that and wanted John dead. But Herod was fearful of John, knowing he was a righteous and holy man, so Herod protected him. But Herod fell into a trap. He had a birthday party,

probably had a little too much wine and was feeling very good. So when his daughter danced for him he promised, in front of all his guests, that he would give her anything, even half of his kingdom (which wasn't his to give...but he was feeling good). We see that word Mark likes so much when he writes *immediately* the daughter ran and asked Herodias, "What should I ask for?" Herodias gave the dastardly answer, "The head of John the Baptist." What a thing to ask a young girl to do! The girl then made this request of Herod and it says he was deeply grieved. He didn't want to do it. Yet, he had given his word in front of everyone, so he felt he could not refuse her. Once again that word appears, "*Immediately* the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head." He gave the platter with John's head on it to the girl and she gave it to her mother. Can you imagine such a gruesome scene? When John's disciples heard about it, they came, took John's body and laid it in a grave, most likely a dangerous thing for them to do. They could be killed too! They acted quite differently than Jesus' disciples, who scattered, after the crucifixion. Not one of them was there when Jesus was laid in his tomb. Also, an interesting aside, in a source totally independent of the Bible, the Jewish historian Josephus noted the death of John the Baptist in his *Antiquities*, XVIII, 5,1-2. Josephus wrote that Herod repudiated his first wife in favor of Herodias and that he was involved in a war with the Nabataean Arabs. Josephus writes, "...some of the Jews thought that the destruction of his army came from God and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John who was called Baptist."

July 19: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

We begin today with the disciples gathering around Jesus to tell him what they did and said after Jesus sent them out two by two on their mission (Mark 6:6b-13). In fact, 6:12-13 gives a brief summary of what they did, "So they (the disciples) went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them." Jesus then took them to a "deserted" place, all by themselves so they could rest. They got there by boat. The word "deserted" is literally, "the desert." Sometimes this word is also translated "wilderness," such as where Jesus was tempted by the devil. As it implies, there was nothing there; it was deserted. Jesus took them there so they could rest because they had been so busy they didn't even have time to eat! This wasn't the first time they were overworked (Mark 3:20). This "deserted" place reference is also a lead up to the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:30-44), which is left out of our reading for this Sunday. An important element of the feeding of the 5,000 is that it took place in a deserted place, so the people were not able to return home in time to prepare a meal. This is one reason Jesus fed them with just five loaves of bread and two fish. In our reading for today we see that when Jesus took the disciples to a deserted place, many people recognized them and followed. The word must have spread because there was a whole crowd of people ("from all the towns") waiting for Jesus and the disciples in the "deserted" place when they went ashore. Jesus looked at the great crowd and had "compassion" for them. In the Greek, this word "compassion" has the feeling of sympathy, mercy and loving concern. Why did Jesus have compassion for them? It says because they were like sheep without a shepherd. We are reminded of John 10:1-16 in which Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus, the good shepherd has compassion (sympathy, mercy, loving concern) on the people because they are like sheep without a shepherd. In this particular instance, how does Jesus show his compassion for the sheep? I can see two ways, 1. It says he taught them many things, 2. He fed them. We could say he fed them in body and soul. It doesn't say *what* Jesus taught them, but it was surely about God and the Kingdom of heaven. I am reminded of a Peanuts cartoon in which Lucy and Linus are looking out a window at the rain, which is coming down in buckets. Lucy says, "Boy, look at it rain. What if it floods the whole world?" Linus: "It will never do that. In the ninth chapter of Genesis God promised Noah that would never happen again, and the sign of the promise is the rainbow." Lucy: "You've taken a great load off my mind." Linus: "Sound theology has a way of doing that." I am sure Jesus was teaching the people sound theology, leading them in the way of the Lord. Our reading now skips the feeding of the 5,000 (6:35-44) as well as Jesus walking on water and calming the storm (6:45-52) – (The John version of the feeding of the 5,000 is the gospel reading for next week. It also involves a storm.). In verse 53 we see Jesus and the disciples crossing the lake again. Just like before, they were recognized ("at once" another word for Mark's favorite, "immediately") and people rushed to them. It doesn't say HOW they were recognized...there was no social media or photos or ANYTHING other than word of mouth in those days. But there was something about Jesus and this band of followers that tipped people off. They flocked to him with their sick and begged that they might even touch the fringe of his cloak. All who touched were healed. Perhaps this "fringe" referred to the blue fringe every male Jew was required to have on the corners of his robe (Numbers 15:38f and Deuteronomy 22:12). People came to be healed or have their loved one healed. Did they come only for the healing, the miracle or were they seeking more? Did they only see Jesus as some kind of "Miracle Sam"? How about each one of us? What are we seeking in the Lord? As the Gospel of Mark asks over and over again, "Who do you say Jesus is?"

July 26: John 6:1-21

Today's reading is the account of the feeding of the 5,000 as found in the Gospel of John. This is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels! What do you think that says about this miracle? It also includes a storm scene on the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias or Lake of Gennesaret. We see Jesus crossing back and forth over this lake/sea (it actually is a fresh water lake, 12 ¾ miles by 7 ½ miles) many times in the gospel accounts (last week too). A large crowd kept following him because of the "signs" he was doing. John uses the word "sign" for the miracles of Jesus. For John, these miracles are signs, a window into the glory of God as found in Jesus. Like signs, they point to Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus went up a mountain and sat down there with his disciples. In those days, teachers sat when they taught. It is mentioned that the Passover was near. This is significant and will be referred to below. Keep it in mind. Next, Jesus sees the large crowd coming toward them and he asks Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" Remember that one of the central elements of the Passover was unleavened bread. Remember too that after the original Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12f), the Hebrew people were set free from slavery and began the Exodus. They complained about lack of food in the desert and God provided manna (Exodus 16f), bread from heaven. Jesus too provides bread, and more... Keep in mind too, that the day after the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus was teaching once again and told the crowd, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). This is one of the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John. "I am" points to God's name revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14 – "I am who I am"). Through these "I am" sayings, Jesus is pointing to his own divinity as the Son of God. And keep in mind that after this "I am" saying, Jesus goes on to say, "I am the bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:41)...like the manna... But that isn't all...Philip tells Jesus that they could never buy enough bread to feed all these people, even with six months' wages! Then Andrew, Simon's brother, tells Jesus that a boy in the crowd has five barley loaves and two fish. Five BARLEY loaves...for those who know their Old Testament, like the people of that time, this would perk up their ears! They would be reminded of our Old Testament reading for this Sunday, 2 Kings 4:42-44, which is the account of the prophet Elisha being directed by the Lord to feed one hundred people using twenty loaves of BARLEY bread. The Lord says, "They shall eat and have some left." Elisha only fed 100 in this miracle. Jesus feeds 5,000! All of this and more is found in the background of the feeding of the 5,000. There is a lot going on here and it causes readers to ask, "Who is this Jesus?" All indications point to the answer being, "the Son of God!" After everyone finishes eating as much as they wanted, Jesus instructs the disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." There is an echo here of Exodus 16:19 in which Moses instructs the people about the manna from heaven saying, "Let no one leave any of it over until morning." But there is more...the day after the feeding of the 5,000, the crowd comes to Jesus again and he says, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of God will give you" (John 6:26-27). It was soon after this that Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (6:51). They filled twelve baskets with leftover fragments. When the people saw this they most likely recalled Elisha's miracle and said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into this world." In the people's minds, they probably saw this prophet as the king who would set them free from oppressive Rome, rather than the embodiment of God's glory, love and word that we see in Jesus. What do you see in Jesus? Do our expectations and image of him keep us from seeing Jesus for who he really is? Next the disciples get into a boat to cross the sea to the town of Capernaum (where Jesus made his home). Jesus was not with them. The seas got rough due to a strong wind. They were rowing and then saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. Needless to say, they had never seen anything like that before and were terrified. In our Bibles it is written that Jesus said, "It is I; do not be afraid." In the Greek it says, "It is I AM; do not be afraid." How does that change the meaning? What is Jesus saying to them and to us? Jesus also gives them his number one command, "Don't be afraid" (for more about that look at previous commentaries). Here is the Son of God. There is nothing to fear. Jesus got in the boat and *immediately* they arrived at their destination. Who is this Jesus?

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