



St. Luke Lutheran Church

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Editor: Jo Klein

# St. Luke Lutheran Church

*Open doors, open hearts, open minds.*

## Parish Times August 2017

Blessed to be a blessing

*Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you, I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*  
Genesis 12:1-3

I love this passage. It is the call of Abram. He was 75 years old and the Lord called him to start a new nation. 75 years old...no children...wife barren...called to start a new nation. Yeah...right... And yet he followed and he was indeed blessed by the Lord and became a blessing for ALL people! If you read this passage closely, you will see the Lord is doing all of the work (read the passage again concentrating on the "I's"). Abram is called to follow and so is blessed to be a blessing. Our Lord calls you and me too. We are called to follow and so be blessed by the Lord to be a blessing for others. One of the ways that happens is through our church, St. Luke. Thanks to your giving of time, talents and money, we are able to do so many beautiful ministries of blessing. I think of our youth and workcamp. We went on a number of them and they were a lot of hard work. In fact, when we went to the workcamp outside of Boston, I thought about taking a year off of workcamps. But as the workcamp progressed and I heard the youth share deeper and deeper feelings, sharing how important this was to their lives, I knew we needed to go again. As they worked to improve others' homes and lives, they were being a blessing while they themselves were being blessed. That is all thanks to you as disciples of Christ and the fact that you have supported St. Luke in its many ministries. What does it mean to you to be a follower of Jesus? How have you been blessed and how has that been a blessing for others. Take time to reflect, give thanks, and share your thoughts with us all.

See you in worship,

Pr. Dave




**August Acolytes**  
6 Victor Landenberger  
20 Zach Moore



Heartfelt thanks to our August Bun Run volunteers: Mike Hegdahl, Sandy and David Gryzwinski, Ken McGrew, Doug and Jo Klein.



**Usher Notes**  
Many thanks to our ushers for August: Matthew, Samantha, Gwen and Steve Brummund, Mike and Nancy Hegdahl, Linda Funkhouser, Roger Diestler.



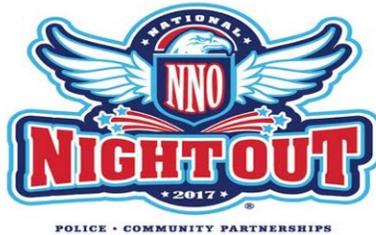
## St. Luke's Farmers' Market

This is the third year of our farmer's market. We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to Coordinators Wendy Bjorklund and Nancy Hegdahl for the many hours of service they have dedicated to get the project off the ground. Thank you, Wendy and Nancy!

Come to the market! Invite your family and friends. Support our local farmers as you peruse the luscious variety of fresh produce in the glorious morning sunshine. Every Saturday, 8am to noon, through Oct. 7. See you there!

## VBS Fun Day!

On Tuesday, August 15 from 5:30-8:00 we will have an evening of learning fun for our children and friends. We will start with a delicious meal, learn about David and Goliath, make some crafts, play games, sing songs, face painting, have a campfire and cook s'mores. What could be better? This is open for children from 4 years old on up. Come and bring a friend. Sign up on the kiosk. Let us know numbers so we have plenty of food, s'mores fixings and crafts. Do it today!



## National Night Out

St. Luke is sponsoring National Night Out for our neighborhood on Tuesday, August 1 at 6:00 p.m. Come, meet neighbors, enjoy some food and good fellowship and live music with our neighbors.

## August WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

### Readers:

- 6 David Nedrelow
- 13 Katy Eggert
- 20 Jeff Kingsley
- 27 Wendy Bjorklund

### Communion:

- 6 Joan Wilson
- 20 Kay Reich



## The Best Things in Life are Free

When we take time to reflect on what are the true blessings in our lives, we recognize that the best things in life are free. Here is one of them, a devotional! We have FREE Portals of Prayer devotionals at church. They are a wonderful way to begin or end your day.

In fact you can do BOTH, begin and end your day with God's Word! There is nothing better. Pick up a FREE Portals of Prayer devotional at church. They are on the counter on the right, after you exit the sanctuary (or on the left as you enter the front doors of the church). Pick one up and use it. It will make you realize once again that the best things in life are indeed free!



## August Birthdays

- 2 Emma McGrew, Phillis Amlee
- 3 Kimberly Tyl
- 5 Sandra Berger
- 9 Katie Kohler
- 10 Phyllis Rice
- 14 Thor Burchill-Riley
- 18 Ralph Wassmann
- 20 Doug Klein, Cathy Erickson
- 21 Max Elliott
- 22 Dean Stadem
- 24 Sol Holmly
- 26 Jay Peterson
- 28 Ray Johnson



## August Anniversaries

- 4 Kurt & Holly Schultz: '84
- 14 Kimberly & William Miller: '84
- 16 Gene & Kathy Spray: '86
- 30 Mary Dybvig & Ralph Skoe: '09

## Church Canoe Trip

Are you ready for BIG adventure? Sign up for the church canoe trip!! The cost will be about \$75.00. We will leave on Thursday, August 17 in the early afternoon and return on the evening of Monday, August 21. We will put in on Sawbill Lake, which has a number of options for fun and adventure. Sign up on the kiosk.



## Fall Bazaar: Crafters or Vendors

Do you know any crafters or vendors who would be interested in renting out a table at our Fall Bazaar this year? The date is Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 to 3:00 and the fee for an 8-foot table is \$35.

If so, please have them contact either Judy Salaba 651-698-8572 or Joyce Bluel 651-690-4614 for a vendor registration form. Space will be considered reserved at the time of submission of registration form and payment.

## Our heartfelt thanks to the Farmers' Market volunteers for August:

- 5 Ken and Jane McGrew
- 12 Larry Litzkow and Laurie Smith
- 19 Julie Ellingson and Joyce Bluel
- 26 Jen and Al Fredrickson



**American Red Cross**  
**BLOOD DRIVE**

**Give Blood • Give Life**

Once again St. Luke is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive. If you are able, come give blood on Saturday, August 12 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. To make an appointment or for more information call 1-800 733-2767 or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Our sponsor code is: St Luke SP. Do it today. You could very well save a life! If you can volunteer for the blood drive (either from 9-12 or 12-3), please let Jo know. We need two volunteers for each time slot. The work is simple and valuable!! Please lend a helping hand.



**Ladies Night Out** in August will take place on **Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>** (**this is one week later than usual, due to VBS**) at TGI Fridays, 2201 Killebrew Dr. in 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) if you are planning on attending by Sunday, August 13th so we have an idea of how many for the reservation.



126 hungry men, women, and children enjoyed a delicious meal at **Loaves and Fishes** at St. Matthew's Catholic church on June 26. Workers from St LUKE were Pastor Dave Person, Larry Litzkow, Joyce Bluel and Roger and Dianne Diestler.



## Musings from the Music Director

Dear Members of St. Luke,  
I hope everyone is enjoying their summer! I would just like to extend another invitation for special music. Choir will begin again in September. Once choir starts, special music openings will be slim! Please contact me if you would like to help out with special music for August.  
Peace,  
Katie



### **School Tools for Kids in Need**

School Tools Drive: Sunday, July 30 through Sunday, August 13. School Tools is a school supplies drive for East Metro children from low-income and homeless families. The drive is sponsored by Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul (formerly St. Paul Area Council of Churches). Please donate some school supplies and help a child begin the new school year right! Watch for a list of suggested supplies in the July 30 and August 6 bulletins. If you have any questions, please talk to Wendy Bjorklund.

## **Commentaries for the August Gospel Readings**

Below please find the commentaries for the August gospel readings. For resources I used "Preaching Matthew's Gospel" by Richard Jensen, Working Preacher and my own notes. Please read the gospel as well as the notes found below, and then take time for prayer as you prepare for worship each Sunday. If you have any questions or comments about the gospel reading, I would LOVE to hear them. Let's grow in and through God's Word!

### **August 6, Matthew 14:13-21**

Just before our reading for today, in Matthew 14:1-12, we read about Herod's birthday party, which included the beheading of John the Baptist. When Jesus heard the news about John's death, he withdrew to a deserted place by boat to be by himself. It doesn't say why Jesus went to a deserted place, but being fully human, perhaps Jesus needed some time to reflect on and mourn John's death. But he didn't have the luxury of such quiet time. As Jesus tried to find a quiet place by boat, a crowd followed him on foot, so that when Jesus came to shore, there was a great crowd waiting for him. When he saw them, he had *compassion* for them. Remember, in the Bible, this word *compassion* is used only for Jesus. The Greek word translated "compassion" literally means "bowels." This is a feeling that comes from the very depths of a person. It helps define who they are. Loving compassion is a hallmark of Jesus (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34). As evening approached, the disciples urged Jesus to send the crowd home so they could go into the villages to get something to eat. This is when Jesus said something that totally shocked the disciples. He said, "You give them something to eat." Can you imagine trying to feed over 5,000 people with next to NOTHING? The incredulous disciples said, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." I think I would have joined them in their skepticism. But, like the disciples, we often overlook *who* we have with us, namely Jesus. As the Apostle Paul wrote, with Jesus, all things are possible. And so Jesus begins to create a banquet and feast with just five loaves and two fish. What a difference this is from the lavish birthday party Herod threw for himself in his opulent palace. But Herod's party was a party of death, while Jesus presided over a banquet of life. Rev. Richard Jensen wrote, "The story in Matthew 14 moves from one banquet to another. Herod's bitter banquet and Jesus' joyous feeding of 5,000 stand side by side in awful contrast. Herod kills God's prophet, fearing that he will otherwise lose face or even lose his hold on power. Jesus acts out of deep compassion to satisfy the needs of ill and hungry crowds. Together the two meals foreshadow Jesus' last meal and execution. Jesus' path to kingship is not paved with slaughtered corpses but only with his self-offering on behalf of the many (20:28)."

### **August 13, Matthew 14:22-33**

This gospel reading follows immediately after last week's reading of the feeding of the 5,000. After all of the people were fed and the leftovers were gathered up, Jesus dismissed the crowd, as well as the disciples. He made the disciples get into a boat and begin heading to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (which is actually a lake about the size of Lake Mille Lacs). Then Jesus went up the mountain by himself to pray. Remember that just before this, Jesus learned that John the

Baptist had been killed and Jesus intended to go to a deserted place, probably to pray, but the crowds followed him. So now Jesus was taking time to pray. Please think about this. Jesus made every effort to find quiet time for prayer. It was essential for him. If prayer is essential for the Son of God, it is just as essential for us. Follow our Savior and take time for prayer. You will find yourself blessed. As Jesus prayed, the disciples were battling headwinds on the Sea of Galilee. It says they were being battered by the waves. The situation was getting terrifyingly out of control. It was then that Jesus suddenly showed up walking on the waters. Can you imagine? The disciples thought he was a ghost. Who can blame them? No one had ever walked on water before, let alone raging waters! They were frightened out of their wits! But then Jesus says something that may have shocked them even more. It doesn't come through in the English, but it sure came through to them. In the original Greek language of the New Testament, it is very plain to see. In the Greek, Jesus said, "Take heart, I AM; do not be afraid." "I AM!" This is the name of God!! Do you remember when Moses asked God his name? The Lord said, "I am who I am." Then he told Moses to tell the Hebrew people that Moses was sent by "I AM." (Exodus 3:13-14). Jesus speaks the saving word to the disciples that I AM is here, the Creator of all! They need not be afraid. It is at this moment that Peter speaks up, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus says, "Come." With that, Peter did in fact walk on the water. He was walking just fine until...he took his eyes off of Jesus. As soon as he did that, he saw the strong wind, became afraid and started to sink. Fear will do that. Fear blinds us and makes the possible seem impossible. But more importantly, Peter took his eyes off of Jesus. It is only through Jesus that Peter could walk on water. It was impossible for him to do it on his own (try it sometime). So he began to sink, calling out to Jesus to save him. Jesus grabbed his hand saying, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Faith is trusting in Jesus, pure and simple. Faith is trust, living, moving trust. When Jesus and Peter got back into the boat, the storm ended and they worshiped Jesus. Remember that the Hebrew people were terrified of the water and storms on the sea. Sea storms represented chaos to them, a separation from God. So when Jesus could even still the storm, that which stood in opposition to God, they were convinced that he was the Son of God. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

### **August 20, Matthew 15:10-28**

Just before our gospel reading, we see Jesus traveling to the land at Gennesaret and healing people there. In 14:35 it says, "After the people of that place (Gennesaret) recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him..." This is in complete contrast with the beginning of our reading, which speaks of religious leaders, Pharisees and scribes, not seeking Jesus out in faith, but rather trying to test Jesus. We move from people seeking Jesus in need to those seeking to test and discredit him. Jesus tries to help the leaders understand that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles, but rather that which comes out of the heart. This same story is told in the Gospel of Mark. In that account, there is a parenthetical note, which says, "thus he declared all foods clean" (Mark 7:19). But the Pharisees and scribes either could not, or refused to listen and understand. The disciples reported back to Jesus that the leaders took offence at what he said. Jesus told them that these particular Pharisees and scribes were false leaders, who did not listen to God. They are the blind leading the blind. Then Jesus explains the teaching to the disciples. After this, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. This is Gentile (non-Jewish) territory. Sure enough, a Canaanite woman came to him, begging him to heal her daughter. She must have been extremely persistent because the disciples couldn't stand her shouting anymore and urged Jesus to send her away. Jesus tells this Gentile woman that he was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel. She continues to beg him to heal her daughter, kneeling before him. Jesus replies to her with what seems to be an insult. Jesus says, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." The "children" are generally interpreted to mean "Jews" in this case. Calling someone a "dog" in that culture is still, to this day, considered one of the worst insults a person could make. Why did Jesus say that? This is so out of character with the Jesus we see elsewhere. Nowhere else in the gospels did he ever refuse to heal someone. What is going on? Is he just feeling a little crabby? After all, he is 100% human (as well as 100% divine). Is he testing the woman? Is he hoping to open her heart in new ways? Or, on the other

hand, is this an opportunity for *her* to teach Jesus something? Jesus is 100% human, after all. All humans always have something to learn... This passage has been interpreted both ways. We don't know. What we do see is that the woman is not deterred by Jesus' rebuke. She fires back, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Even a crumb will do. Had she heard about the feeding of the 5,000 in which the crumbs, the leftovers, filled 12 baskets (Matthew 14:13-21)? Did she see the grace and love of Jesus spilling out all around him? That is all she needed, just a crumb of grace and healing power for her child. Jesus apparently saw this in her as well in what she said. He replied, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Her daughter was healed instantly. Richard Jensen writes, "By the *law* the woman should have been excluded from the table (she was not a Jew). By the *gospel* mercy is shown. The stories told in 15:1-28, a story of the Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem and a story of a woman from Gentile land, present us with a grand contrast. The Pharisees dispute and disbelieve. They should know better. The woman disputes and believes. How did she know better? Yet she becomes Emmanuel's teacher. She reminded him of his mission to the Gentiles."

### **August 27, Matthew 16:13-20**

Up until this point, people have been asking who this Jesus is. Now Jesus asks it of his disciples, "Who do people say the *Son of Man* is?" "Son of Man?" Do you ever wonder why Jesus calls himself the "*Son of Man*?" What does he mean by that? To tell the truth, there is no simple answer. If you pay attention to how he uses it, you will see that he uses this title in a variety of ways throughout the gospels. Jesus uses it to refer to himself as a human being, but also as the Son of God who will come again in glory. He uses it to say the Son of Man will give his life as a ransom for many. In other words, Jesus uses it to refer to his humanity, to one who comes in angelic glory, the one who is the Messiah and Son of God, as well as the one who will suffer, give his life for others and rise from the dead. This title, "Son of Man" which Jesus uses for himself is packed with meaning. Take note whenever Jesus uses it and you will see the many dimensions of Jesus, 100% human; 100% divine! Now back to his question. Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" It is important to note that he asks this when they are in the village of Caesarea Philippi. This was the home of a temple dedicated to Caesar (as god) as well as various shrines dedicated to multiple Greek gods. In this place dedicated to many gods, Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" The disciples reply with the same list mentioned in Mark 6:14-16 when Herod was asking about Jesus. It seems there were various rumors circulating about Jesus and who he was. 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. Jesus then asks the disciples who *THEY* think he is and Peter answers, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." What a statement of faith! And what a place to make that statement, a place dedicated to many gods. Peter saw clearly and correctly that Jesus is the Son of the *LIVING* God! Jesus responds saying that Peter has been blessed to give such an answer, since he has received it not through his own wisdom or through a person, but through God himself. We Lutherans are reminded of Luther's explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed (about the work of the Holy Spirit) when Luther writes, "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel..." In other words, faith is a gift of God! About this, Robert Smith writes, "Jesus looks at Peter, called, instructed, sometimes boldly treading the waters, and sometimes sinking like a rock (14:28-31), full of understanding and often of little faith, but nevertheless at this point knowing and confessing. Peter stands forth among the Twelve as their representative, and on behalf of all he utters the good confession. And in him Jesus sees the whole future community of disciples and confessors. Jesus looks away from the Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes (15:1-20; 16:1-12) and gazing upon Peter and the Twelve, sees the church...the new community of the end times." It is the church, the confessing community of Christ, that is given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. Thanks be to God!

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