



Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor David Eisenhuth

The assembly of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was a good experience for me. That's saying a lot because in times past I would rather have had a root canal that go! Bishop Bill has made a real effort to shape the event into something other than receiving reports (that could just as well be read in advance) and endlessly debating the budget and resolutions. This year the bishop asked all there to commit to 90 days of prayer using a Moravian book which closely links prayer and Bible study.

As part of this emphasis, we as members of the ELCA are challenged as to how we use the Bible. We know that it was written in a specific time period for people experiencing something real in their lives. We try also to understand who wrote it. Of course we are talking about 66 individual books that comprise Hebrew scripture and our New Testament. Yes, it's divinely inspired and eternally true, but it can't simply be poured into our heads. We interpret it through many lenses. Luther suggested we are all Biblical commentators, because we are people of the Holy Spirit but individuals who see things differently.

The article that follows was sent to us as part of the bishop's blog right after the assembly. I am impressed with it because it is one of the clearest explanations of Biblical criticism I have ever read. I hope you find it informative.

HOLY WISDOM, HOLY WORD: REFLECTIONS ON THE DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Pastor Lauren Muratore, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Baltimore

The Delaware-Maryland Synod gathered for Synod Assembly last Thursday through Saturday, as we do every year. This year, in addition to some exciting business and

encouraging reports, the assembly was gathered around a central, grounding theme: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

The theme took center stage at assembly, shaping our prayer, our voting posture, and our perspectives. Whether the topic at hand was climate change, financial stewardship, inclusion and affirmation of folks who identify as LGBTQIA+, or the very future of the church itself, we kept returning to scripture and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for guidance.

During one "Theme Team" session, the Rev. Dr. Amsalu Geleta and Colleen Carpenter-Gonia challenged the assembly to think back to our earliest memory of the Bible. After a brief silence at my table, where everyone was reaching back through their memories to seize just the right one, stories came pouring forth. Stories of Sunday school, morning gatherings with family around the breakfast table, even memories of reading the Bible in school! Some struggled to find an answer, others lit up, recalling—viscerally—what it felt like to hold the weight of the Word, to turn the thin pages of scripture.



WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF THE BIBLE?

We talked about how our individual understandings of and relationship to the Bible has changed over the years, and continues to evolve. There are lots of ways to read the Bible. Use the Bible. Interact with the Bible. Dwell in God's Word.

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What Is Trinity Talking About?

June Habeck Holler

“This is a moment in history . . . put before us by God for adventure, hope, and discovery.” (Quotations in the article are from Tod Bolsinger’s book, *Canoeing the Mountains*, now being read by members of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Last month all members of Trinity were invited (25 have responded so far) to attend Thursday night discussions based on *Canoeing the Mountains*. Here are the highlights of what has been discussed in the month of June.

“Our society has changed radically from that of our childhood.” Because of scandals in churches and government, the many Americans have lost faith in our institutions. “Many Americans are volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.” We all know now how much things have changed.

Our church has not changed. Although that sameness was a comforting surety to many for a long time, we know now that churches are closing all over this country. At Trinity, aside from becoming consciously and sincerely more welcoming, we use the same liturgies, music, and program offerings that Lutheran churches have for decades. Even much of our Praise Worship music in the Contemporary Service is from the 1980s.

Our country has a greater diversity of cultures, languages, and religions than ever before. The majority of young adults, with or without children, clearly voice a preference for “the spiritual” over “the religious” in their lives.

“90% of churches will choose to die rather than change.” So do we keep on working harder at maintaining our longstanding traditions? Or are we being called to adapt the church to 21st century needs, in response to the Gospel’s call for unconditional love?

“Adapt or die.” Like the early disciples, we can find our way in this completely new era of ministry with God’s guidance and the power of his Spirit.

“When the church is in mission, it is the true church.” For Trinity to determine its mission, the members who chose to be “scouts” will be discerning what makes us different (our identity, our DNA), what are our core values, and what God is calling us to do based on our faith and theology.

Three of the scouts discussions produced these thoughts:

- Why did we continue to focus outreach with youth when the greatest number of people in and beyond the church is an aging baby boomer population? Instead shouldn’t we be seeking and ministering to their needs, until that situation changes?
- God places us where we are needed. In 2019 that is in

a poor neighborhood with urgent needs for Gospel love, care, healing, and hope. Not just for clothing and food, but for interaction, relationships, and forging efforts together to make our community healthy, strong, united, and faithful.

- It’s true that our neighborhood doesn’t have the income to support our church’s needs; but God doesn’t call us to minister only to those financially secure or to maintain the status quo. We are called to witness to God’s love through our actions to all of suffering humanity, as Jesus did.

So what does it mean to be the church? “Christians make their values and actions the same, meaning there is no separation between behavior on Sundays in church and our behavior Monday through Saturday.” So our first mission is to model Jesus daily in our thinking, values, choices, and actions.

“The pastor today is not the ultimate authority of the past; instead, he/she is a fellow traveler on this mission journey.” We see the pastor’s role adapting to the changing needs of the times.

“Adaptation for us requires a shift in values, expectations, attitudes, and habits of behavior.” In this process of adaptation, leaders in new mission will venture forth doing new things, reflect on the experience, then do it all over again or change it. This cycle is repeated until new efforts meet with success. In adapting, leaders learn to look at the big picture, diagnose the problems, then reframe them to address the problems.

“When changes occur in a traditional setting, conflict is to be expected as there will be anxiety, fear, and losses. Stay calm, stay connected, and stay the course. Everyone will be changed by this ‘disruptive education’ through doing thoughtful, reflective responding.” As author Brene Brown notes, “We can ‘experience the vulnerability that allows God to shape us.’”

We cannot affect the current values of society by doing what worked in the past. In their 1804-1806 Corps of Discovery Expedition, Captain Meriweather Lewis and his good friend Second Lieutenant William Clark had planned to use canoes in their journey west to the Pacific Ocean, but had to adapt when they reached the Rocky Mountains. They had to trust each other and their team, go off the map, rely on Native Americans, and forge ahead while learning.

Trusting God’s guidance and each other, Trinity can focus our core values, on where we are, seek direction from those in need around us, and adventure forth. As we

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What Is Trinity Talking About? Continued

do so, we can learn to use our individual gifts to “transform our church’s mission into a new season of faithful expression.”

And pray. Pray for our congregation, our pastors, our leaders, our neighborhood, and our mission. Ask God to open our hearts and minds to his will. Pray knowing that God gives us abundant life—not to merely survive—but to thrive.

Pastor Chris Ramsey sent the congregation this scripture when he formed “Called out Scouts” for this love-giving and life-giving adventure together: “St. Paul prays for us, ‘I ask that your minds may be opened to see God’s light, so you will know the hope to which God has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings God promises His people, and how very great is God’s power in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength which God used when He raised Christ from death. . . .’” from Ephesians 1:18-19.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

For the Trinity Food Pantry: boxes of generic crackers (like saltines), box mixes for cookies and cakes, and snack packs of animal crackers for children. Remember to bring in your extra produce from home gardening over the summer!

For the Trinity Clothing Bank: women’s underwear (sizes 6, 7,8, 9), men’s sneakers, and, from Dollar Tree: deodorant, body wash, shampoo, body lotion, and mouth-wash.

PONDER THIS

“I’m staying positive, because my God is good!” the response of a crippled older woman when asked how she was doing as she was packing up her food.

AT A GLANCE: TLC’S FOOD PANTRY & CLOTHING BANK

	2019 Jan - May*	2018 Jan - May	% Increase (decrease)
Food Pantry			
Families	642	678	
Individuals	1,566	1,643	(4.7)
Clothing Bank			
Families	844	900	(6.2)

* January 2019: Clothing Bank was closed 3 days to move to its new location

150th Anniversary Celebrations

Carol Brashears

Sunday, August 25, we welcome Pastor David Buchenroth to be our guest preacher as we celebrate our 150th anniversary Sunday. We will have one service at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary, with a coffee hour following in Fellowship Hall. Our emphasis that day will be Christian ministry through the years. There will be lots of pictures and surprises. Spread the word about this celebration!

Attention all former choir members—we will have the final service celebration of our 150th anniversary on October 13. This service will emphasize our music history. We want to have a reunion for choir members, and all are invited to sing that day. Again, spread the word and mark your calendar. Anybody who sang from Cherub Choir on up are invited to join us that Sunday to sing!

The Charity of the Month Is Back

Carol Brashears

The Charity of the Month program will once again be an active ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church. The Social Ministry Committee has been charged with the responsibility of establishing an orderly process to select the beneficiary of this charity. Each month we will spotlight a program or project that Trinity members may support by making a special donation. The beneficiary may be a Trinity program, a community, local, national, or global project.

Any individual, committee, or church staff member may nominate a program/project for consideration. Applications for 2020 are available in Fellowship Hall, the narthex, or the church office. The deadline for consideration is September 30, 2019. Questions? — please contact Carol Brashears or Jeff Reed.

Save the Date!

Deacon Inge Dudda, OSSD

Mark your calendars for September 13 to 14, 2019 for a Prayer Retreat. Details to follow!

Pastor's Ponderings, Continued

We develop questions as we go—sometimes more questions than answers! Colleen shared: “In Sunday school, I asked the teacher, ‘I know the Bible says God created us, but who created God?’” Our keynote speaker, Peter Enns, encouraged us not to shy away from such questions but to let them drive us into a deeper investigation of scripture, and deeper in love with what God is revealing about Godself in this library of books we hold out to be the source and norm of our faith.

The assembly also took time to acknowledge that our approach to scripture matters. That is, Lutherans are pretty big on reading the Bible *together*, and from many angles. We check our personal understanding of what scripture is revealing by holding it up to historical context, literary criticism, important theological perspectives, and, of course, what is being revealed to the wider community. Are we reading what we want to read, or what's actually there?

It strikes me that for all the holy wisdom encapsulated in the Bible, it is so very easily misused. In apartheid South Africa, as state violence against citizens of color escalated, then-President P.W. Botha gave a Bible to every soldier in the South African Defense Force. They carried scripture in their pockets as they went out to execute segregation and horrific oppression. Those Bibles were inscribed with the message: “This Bible is an important part of your calling to duty. When you are overwhelmed with doubt, pain, or when you find yourself wavering, you must turn to this wonderful book for answers ... of all the weapons you carry, this is the greatest because it is the Weapon of God.” And with those words and the Word in hand, soldiers committed atrocities.

Indeed, scripture has been and still is too often weaponized against people of color, women, queer folks, indigenous peoples, and immigrants—that is by no means an exhaustive list. It's no wonder so many who believe in a God of mercy, justice, and love have chosen to set this holy tome aside. Walk away from the pages of the Bible and, often, away from the church as well.

It begs the question, why are we still here? And why do we read on?

Well, as Bishop Gohl highlighted in his sermon for the assembly on Friday, it is because “the love of Christ urges us on” (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is because, when read in community, through the lens of Jesus, it is the very same Bible that is so often misused for hateful ends that reveals to us a God who calls all people beloved, who stands with the ones on the margins, who joins us in our sorrows and hurts and in the lowest moments of our lives—so much so that this God would put on skin and be born and walk in the dirt and die on a cross. It is the Bible, in all of its mystery and wonder, by which we first and most clearly experience the God of those who wander, the God of our

wild and restless passions, the God of the immigrant and stranger, the God of the oppressed, the God of sunrises and sunsets, the God of imagination, the God of generosity, the God who binds up broken hearts, the God who generates creation itself, the God who is making all things new, the God who died but didn't stay dead.

And so, we also rise. We reclaim scripture and commit to read it together (check out the Delaware-Maryland Synod Reads Together Facebook group!). We reclaim scripture as a guiding force and inspiration in our lives. The Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly reclaimed scripture as the source and norm of our faith, and it was beautiful to behold.

WILL YOU JOIN THOSE WHO ATTENDED SYNOD ASSEMBLY IN READING THE BIBLE EVERY DAY?

I'm excited to see what blessings flow from this renewed orientation to our ancient stories, our sacred texts. I'm excited to see what happens when we stop pointing fingers at one another, as the bishop mentioned we are so wont to do these days, and instead point to Jesus. I can't wait to see what happens when Lutherans dwell with God's Word and then take it to the world.

“For the love of Christ urges us on,” always. Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. Thanks be to God.



Ice Cream Social and the Movie “Risen”

Kathy King

Please join us on Saturday, July 20, at 2 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for an enjoyable treat and a movie about a Roman soldier's search for Jesus' body after his resurrection. This event is hosted by Senior Ministry, but we encourage all ages to join us.

Signup sheets are on the bulletin boards in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

Celebrating 150 years at Trinity!

Judy Melby-Robinson

Happy July from the 150th Anniversary Committee! As part of our continuing celebration of 150 years at Trinity, we highlight a recipe from one of our church cookbooks, compiled with recipes from many members over the years. This month's recipe is from Michele Nearchos. She and her husband Rodney have been members for over 10 years and currently keep our church property flowerbeds looking their best! They have a small farm, and Michele does a lot of canning and preserving of their farm crop, which they share with church friends each season. Enjoy her blueberry pound cake recipe while blueberries are now in season!

BLUEBERRY POUND CAKE

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ½ c. room temp. butter | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 3 eggs, at room temp. | 1 tsp. nutmeg |
| 3½ c. all-purpose flour | 2 c. sugar |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | 4 c. fresh blueberries |
| ½ tsp. salt | 1 c. milk |

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Butter or spray a 10 inch tube pan and set aside. In a large bowl, sift flour, baking powder, salt, spices. Set aside. In another large bowl, beat together butter and sugar with electric mixer on medium until combined. Beat in eggs. Stir berries into the flour mixture. By hand, carefully stir blueberry mixture into butter mixture. Add milk just until combined. Pour into cake pan. Bake for 75 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 30 minutes.

Micah's Backpack

Carol Brashears

Summer is here, and we have had another successful school year with Micah's Backpack. Both Bester and Eastern Elementary Schools are extremely grateful for the bags that go home each week. At the end of the year, we were assembling 48 backpacks for Eastern students and 15 for Bester students. With only a few weeks to go in the school year, we were able to add a student at Eastern at their request. There are always students who need food. Here is a quick story to share. Vanessa, our staff liaison at Eastern, tells us that a little girl came in one day to return her backpack. She said with pride that they were thankful for the bag, but she would not need it anymore because her daddy had gotten a job. What praise on so many levels! The bag was quickly given to another student at Eastern.

Thank you for all of the volunteers who work in and week out make this program run so smoothly. From the volunteers who set up the food and count the bags to those who pack and deliver each week, your time is appreciated. You are making a difference. Over 1,044 students were served countywide at the end of the school year, and the program is served by 51 sponsoring churches in Washington County. God is good and continues to open doors each year so that the children are served. What a blessing.

If you would like to be part of the Micah's program please watch for volunteer information in August!



** Indicates under 10 years old

- 1 Rhonda Munson
- 3 Leslie LeBlanc
- 5 Inez Jones**
- 9 Adam Shuster
- 10 Brent Pryor
- Ricky Stoner
- 12 Kelsey Reed
- 13 Alleen Carl**
- 14 Mattie Stull
- 15 Nancy Krueger
- Aaron Little
- 16 Carol Aarsand
- 17 Joshua Repp
- 18 Ron Smith**
- Debra Warner
- 19 Devon Little
- 23 Megan Clark
- 23 Casimer Kriechbaum
- Varner Paddack**
- 25 Philip Pietro
- 26 Genny Hammond
- 26 Jordi Repp Tyler Repp
- 28 Chad Brashears
- John Holden Hershey
- 29 Kelly Pietro
- 30 Sue Kershner
- 31 Kirklyn Kline**
- Ashleigh McCoy



* Indicates 40 years or more

- 1 Barry and Sara Oxendine*
- 6 Rick and Kelley Anthony
- 17 Ed and Jane Drawbaugh*
- 18 Richard and Kay Melby
- Ron and Barbara Smith*
- 29 Brian and Genny Hammond

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Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages at 9:55 a.m.
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Food Pantry and Clothing Bank: (301)733-5651
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Washington County Literacy Council: (301)739-4208
Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

