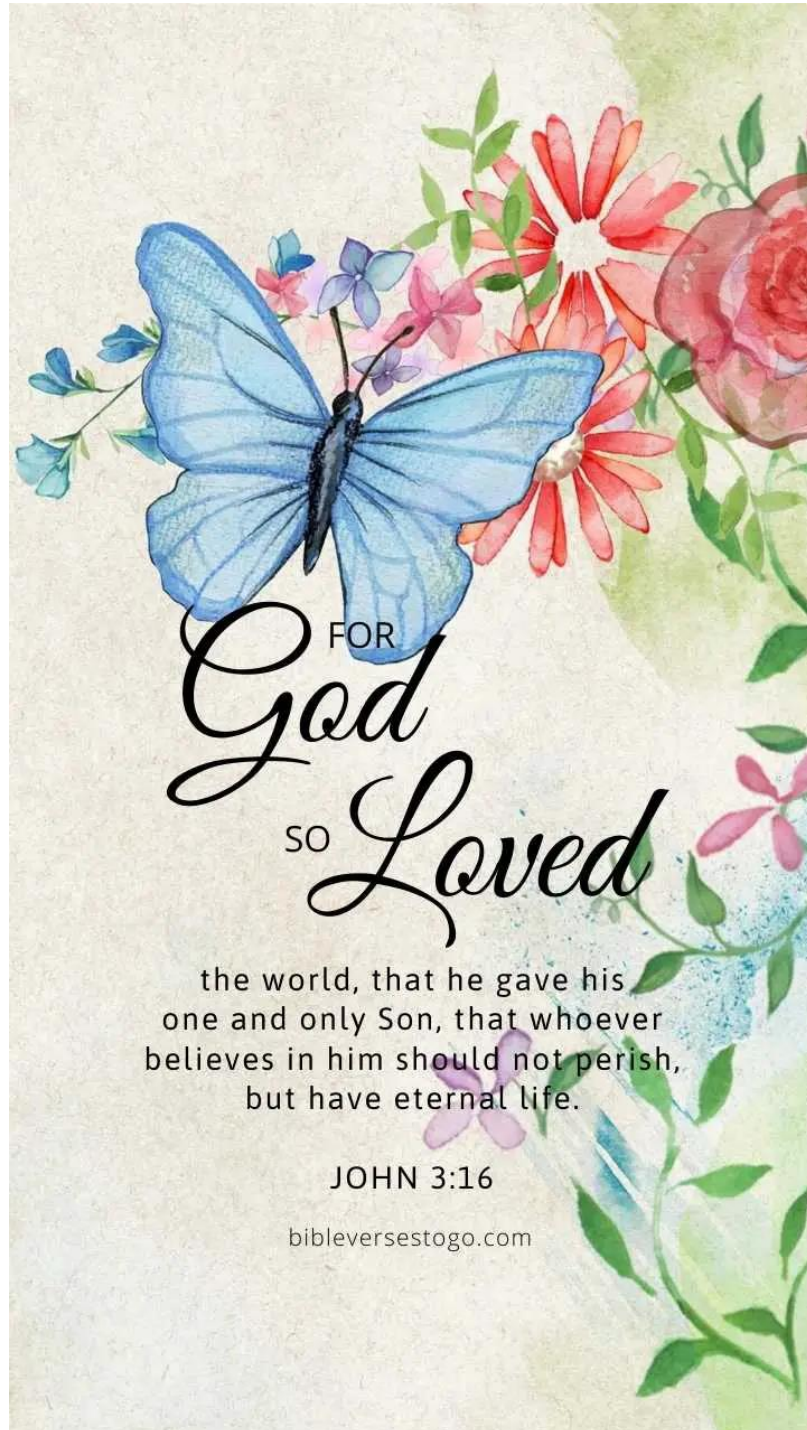


RESURRECTION NEWS



April 2024

Pastor's Letter
April 2024

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Spring is a season of new life, both in the Church and in the world. We have celebrated the light of Christ entering into the dark, cold world on Christmas. We have observed growth of that light, both in the increasing daylight and in the spread of the good news of Christ to the nations in the season of Epiphany. We have journeyed through the long, somber, season of Lenten repentance. And now we have arrived at the season of life—Easter. New life is budding in the creation all around us as we, in the Church, celebrate the new life that Christ's resurrection brings us.

In a very real way, the Church is about nothing more and nothing less than life. Life is the essence of who we are, and life is precisely what Christ came to this earth to give: *"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

Unfortunately, I cannot say that the Church is "pro-life" without a very specific (and narrow) view of what that means coming into most people's heads. I suspect that this is because we American Christians have given far too much license for the secular world to invade our thinking. And so it is that the primary categories with which we think are political rather than theological. Saint Paul's warning against such ways of thinking could not be clearer: *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2).

The Church of Jesus Christ must be thoroughly pro-life. Again, if you hear those words as instruction on how to vote, re-read the previous paragraph. The Word of God is not concerned merely with how you vote. The Word of God is concerned with how you live. Thus, when Proverbs 31:9 instructs us to *"plead the cause of the poor and needy"*, it primarily has in mind the *"opening of one's mouth"*, not the casting of a vote. Likewise, the Apostle James instructs us: *"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). Note that the key word in this verse is "visit." We are not to be hearers of the Word only, but doers of the Word (James 1:22).

If the new life that Christ gives to us by virtue of His resurrection isn't reason enough for the Church to be thoroughly pro-life, then the Fifth Commandment makes it clear. Concordia Publishing House's updated explanation to Luther's Small Catechism (2017) provides helpful answers to the question: *"How does this commandment apply to some specific issues today?"* (Question 62 on page 88 and following). Five answers are given with supporting Bible passages:

- *[The Fifth Commandment] forbids aborting the life of an unborn child (also called elective abortion)—see Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:16; Luke 1:41-44.*
- *It forbids killing oneself (suicide), seeking help in killing oneself, assisting a person in taking his or her own life (assisted suicide), or killing a person who asks to die or whose life is deemed as too burdensome (euthanasia)—see Psalm 31:14-15.*
- *It forbids acting violently or abusively toward a child or spouse (child abuse or domestic abuse)—see Colossians 3:19; Colossians 3:21.*
- *It forbids engaging in reckless and self-destructive behavior (for example, substance abuse)—see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.*
- *It forbids hating, despising, or slandering other groups of people (prejudice, racism, and so forth)—see Acts 17:26; James 2:1; 1 John 3:15; Revelation 5:9.*

Life is precious to God, and so it is precious to His Church also. In the Lord's Church, this life-principal reigns supreme: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"* (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39). This means that we must be

willing to open our hearts and lives to those in need: orphans, widows, sojourners (immigrants), refugees, the unborn, and all those who cannot defend themselves.

Why is it, then, that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod seems hyper-focused on the life of the unborn rather than other stages of life? First, we must acknowledge that if and when our church body's focus on defending the unborn has caused us to *neglect* or *despise* other stages of life, we must repent and plead for forgiveness. For the Lord would have us care for life at all stages.

But if there is one life issue which ought to matter most to the Lord's Church, it is protection of the unborn, for Proverbs 31:8 could not be clearer: *"Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die."* It is a terrible tragedy when adults are oppressed. But when it is young children, especially the unborn, who are oppressed and put to death, the tragedy is even greater, for they cannot even speak for themselves.

And so it is that the Church must be the voice of those who cannot speak. I will leave the political implications of this to be discussed and debated by others, but there is at least one theological implication worth reflecting on. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of an abortion is that the unborn child is robbed of the opportunity to speak to its Lord and Maker. And so, it is good and right that the Church be the voice of the unborn before the Lord. This is why we pray weekly in the Prayer of the Church that the Lord would have mercy on "those who suffer from legalized abortion in our country."

This prayer is salutary and necessary for the Church to pray on behalf of the unborn, but it is also necessary to pray on behalf of all who suffer from legalized abortion. Though the murdered child's suffering is clear, this is not the only suffering which occurs as a result of an abortion. The doctors and healthcare professionals who are complicit in these abortions have a heavy weight on their consciences. And the parents, especially the mothers, who undergo abortions suffer tremendously—in body, mind, and spirit. Abortion is a grievous evil with enduring consequences on many levels.

The "issue" of abortion is more than a theoretical matter for many. If you are suffering in body, mind, or spirit from the effects of an abortion, know that Christ has not abandoned you, and His Church stands ready to walk alongside you and remind you of His mercy: *"He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us"* (Psalm 103:10-12).

We are living in evil days where good is thought to be evil and evil is thought to be good. Lord, have mercy upon us! But in the face of such evil, the Church ever stands in hope. Christ is risen from the dead! *"Now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive"* (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). May our Lord grant us such a joy and confidence in the life He has given us that we would be a people that is thoroughly pro-life!

In Christ,
Pastor Akers

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

John 10:10

Notes from your Deaconess

Dear Brothers and Sisters of LCR,

The book and story of “Tobit” in the Apocrypha, while outside the canon of Hebrew scriptures, “presents a fine, delightful, devout comedy” according to Martin Luther’s introduction to it. “Tobit” contains echos of the books of Daniel and Esther as it relates events which occurred (or are claimed to have occurred) during the exile of God’s people. We also, to some extent, experience this sense of living in exile – thinking and acting in ways sometimes contrary to those in the world around us. An angel and a demon both have active roles in this tale, reminding us that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). The journey and adventures of Tobit’s son Tobias have some parallels to journeys taken in the book of Genesis – the one by Abraham’s servant to find a wife for Isaac (chapter 24), and the one of Jacob (beginning in chapter 28) –as all involve travel to a distant place where relatives live. Portions of “Tobit” contain instructions for godly living and also prayers of thanksgiving and praise to God. Again from Luther’s comments:

Tobit shows how things may go badly with a pious peasant or townsman, and there may be much suffering in married life, yet God always graciously helps and finally crowns the outcome with joy, in order that married folk would learn to have patience and, in a genuine fear of God and firm faith, put up gladly with all sorts of hardships because they have hope...Therefore this book is useful and good for us Christians to read.

I plan to hold Saturday women’s Bible studies on April 6 and 20. We have begun working through the St. Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Please know that you are welcome to join whenever you can, and not to worry about not always attending, as study of any portion of God’s word with others always bears fruit! I can add you to my email list if you let me know. I send an email during the week prior to each meeting. I also can provide a Zoom link if you’d like to join that way instead of in person. We meet downstairs in classroom 104 at 8:30 a.m. for a time of fellowship, Bible study, and sharing of prayer concerns.

Under his mercy,
Sharon M. Conover

Give thanks worthily to the Lord and praise the King of the ages that his tent may be built in you again with joy. May he cheer those within you who are captives and love those within you who are distressed, to all generations forever. Many nations will come from afar to the name of the Lord God, bearing gifts in their hands, gifts for the King of heaven. Generations of generations will give you joyful praise.

Tobit 13:10-11

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Sunday morning Bible Class meets weekly at 8:45 a.m. in Room 201. Each week, Pastor will lead a deeper study of the Epistle Reading to help us prepare for the Divine Service. As time allows, we will also discuss your questions from the Read the Bible in Two Years readings.

Mid-Week Bible Class

In April and May, we will have a special mid-week Bible class discussing the history, theology, and implications of the 1974 Concordia Seminary Walk Out. On the 50th anniversary (this past February), a special edition of the Lutheran Witness was published on this topic. Concordia Historical Institute also recently published a book on the same topic, titled, "*Rediscovering the Issues Surrounding the 1974 Concordia Seminary Walkout*" (available from CPH).

The class will meet in Room 201 on **Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m.** beginning on April 3rd/4th. Zoom will be available for the Wednesday evening session. Please speak with Pastor Akers if you are interested in being on the distribution list.

The class will plan to cover the following historical and theological topics:

- What was the 1974 Concordia Seminary Walkout? (overview of the history)
- The Gospel and Scripture
- The Historical-Critical Method
- Confessional Subscription
- The Third Use of the Law
- Seminex and the Supernatural
- Abiding Effects of the Walkout

Men's Retreat

A spring Men's Retreat is being planned for **Saturday, April 27**, at the Huesers' Camp in St. Albans. More details will be available soon. Please talk to one of the Elders if you would like more information.

Game Nights

Game nights will be scheduled for the first Friday of each month, unless otherwise noted. Bring a game and/or a snack to share and join us for fun and fellowship! Our next game night is **Friday, April 5, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall.

Altar Flowers

If you have signed up for Altar Flowers, we have a new form with a check box to either take home or donate to an Oak Grove resident.

Spring Cleanup Day

Yard clean up and window washing work party at the church **Saturday, April 20**, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Annual Paddle for Pine Tree Camp

Join the LCR Board for Missions group raising money for scholarships to the Pine Tree Camp by taking an easy canoe or kayak paddle down the Kennebec River from Solon to North Anson on Saturday, June 1. See Kemp or Rachel Anderson for details.

April Stewardship

	<u>April 7</u>	<u>April 14</u>	<u>April 21</u>	<u>April 28</u>
<u>Acolyte</u>	Elizabeth Akers	Hayley Farr	Matthew Akers	Callum Goldsmith
<u>Subdeacon</u>	Chris Batson	Mark Larsen	Steve Farr	Charlie MacPherson
<u>Ushers</u>	John Ayotte Brian Watson	Mo Cote Glenn Carlson Jr.	Mike Hein Rick Kubeck	Steve Applebee Jeff Sammons
<u>Greeters</u>	The Wilson Family	Gail Maestas & James Breslin	Sharon Klipp & Julie Kohl	Avis Grant & Christine Thomas
<u>Altar Care</u>	Julie Kohl	Lydia Bendas	Avis Grant	Amber Akers
<u>Flowers</u>	Julie Kohl	Ouellette Family	Ouellette Family	Mo & Becky Cote
<u>Fellowship</u>	Church Council	Mo & Becky Cote	Carlsons & Ouellettes	Sharon Klipp

Defending the Faith

Sometimes the Best Defense is a Good Defense

This month, we'll take a look at the differences between LCMS Lutherans and Baptists.

One of my first observations when moving to Maine in 2019 was "you can't swing a dead cat around here without hitting a Baptist church!" Doing a little digging, it turns out I was right. There are 146 Baptist churches in Maine, compared to our 3 LCMS congregations!

I should clarify that I am talking about the American Baptist Church (ABC), (www.abc-usa.org) not the Southern Baptist Church (www.sbc.net).

Baptists are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We agree on most doctrinal issues. These include:

Scripture as the divinely inspired Word of God and the authoritative guide to understanding the Triune God as well as faith and practice.

The nature of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the nature of salvation and the end times.

We do diverge in some things though. For example:

As a church body, the ABC says that they "*tend to avoid embracing prepared creeds or other statements that might compromise our obligation to interpret Scripture as individuals within the community of faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*" Their emphasis is on supporting religious freedom.

They further state that they "*continually seek the mind of Christ in all matters*" and "*respects the variety of theological understandings that its members, and other Christians, have embraced*". They emphasize freedom over conformity to a set of beliefs and derive their basis for this from Galatians 5:1 - *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.* (Honestly, I have a hard time connecting Galatians 5:1 with encouraging subjective views on matters of faith.)

We also differ in our understanding of the sacraments of Baptism (they refer to it as "Believer's Baptism) and the Lord's Supper.

They firmly state that Baptism is only for those "*who have the maturity to understand its profound significance: resurrection to new life in Christ.*" In their theology, they believe that the power of redemption in Baptism comes from the believer's personal decision, while our position is that the power in Baptism comes from God's Word, joined to the water.

To ABC Baptists, Baptism is "an outward sign of inward faith" and must be done only by full immersion, as that follows the Lord's example.

To us, Baptism is a means of Grace. It is a miraculous drowning of the old Adam from which we emerge as a new creature in Christ. It is a means of salvation – and can be accomplished by sprinkling or immersion. Scripture does not prescribe a method, so it is a matter of adiaphora (a particular method is neither commanded nor prohibited).

Neither does Scripture require that a person be of a certain age or level of comprehension to be Baptized. Matthew 28:19 – "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*". No qualifications for Baptism are stated.

Their view of the Lord's Supper is also quite different from ours. They view the bread and wine not as 'the real presence, in, with and under' the elements as we do, but as strictly symbolic. For them, it is a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

So, are ABC Baptists fellow Christians? Clearly yes. With some divergent views to be sure, but those views are not heretical.

I fully expect that in Heaven we will see many Baptists!

As always, I'm open to suggestions, comments and especially criticisms at charles.j.macpherson@gmail.com.

Charlie MacPherson, SDG



BIBLE QUIZ

Monthly Worship

April 7

Sunday within the Octave of Easter

Psalm: 43

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Epistle: 1 John 5:4-10a

Holy Gospel: John 20:19-31

April 14

Second Sunday after Easter

Psalm: 33

First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:21b-25

Holy Gospel: John 10:11-16

April 21

Third Sunday after Easter

Psalm: 66

First Reading: Isaiah 40:25-31

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:11-20

Holy Gospel: John 16:16-22

April 28

Fourth Sunday after Easter

Psalm: 147:1-11

First Reading: Isaiah 12:1-6

Epistle: James 1:17-21

Holy Gospel: John 16:5-15

- 1. Who betrayed Jesus to the religious authorities for thirty pieces of silver?**
 - A. Peter
 - B. Judas Iscariot
 - C. John
 - D. Thomas
- 2. What miracle did Jesus perform when feeding a multitude with just five loaves of bread and two fish?**
 - A. Turning water into wine
 - B. Healing the blind
 - C. Raising the dead
 - D. Feeding the 5,000
- 3. Who was the father of King Solomon?**
 - A. King David
 - B. King Saul
 - C. King Josiah
 - D. King Solomon had no father.
- 4. How many plagues were inflicted upon Egypt before Pharaoh finally released the Israelites?**
 - A. 7
 - B. 10
 - C. 12
 - D. 3
- 5. Who was the oldest person mentioned in the Bible?**
 - A. Abraham
 - B. Noah
 - C. Methuselah
 - D. Adam



- 4/4 Lucia Wilson
- 4/6 Seth Carlson
- 4/7 Gail Carrano
- 4/10 Matthew Akers
- 4/12 Emily Shaw
- 4/22 Josiah Wilson
- 4/26 Maria Kubeck
- 4/28 Glenn Carlson Jr.
- 4/29 Emily Larsen



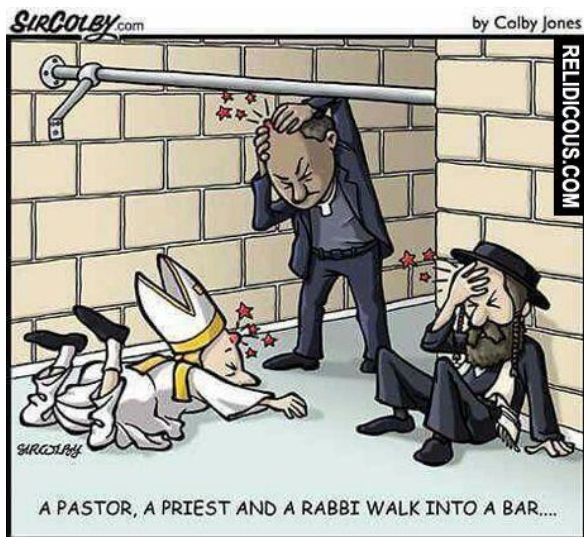
- 4/3 Laverne Pelletier
- 4/13 Dan Callahan
- 4/17 Darryll Zahner
- 4/19 Elizabeth Reed
- 4/21 Matthew Akers
- Lucia Wilson
- 4/26 Taylan Thomas
- 4/27 Rick Drageland
- 4/?? Chester Gilbert
- Charlie MacPherson
- Cianan Morris



- 4/5 Miriam Schiebel
- 4/7 Corina Wilson
- Darryll Zahner
- 4/8 Lydia Bendas
- 4/10 Dan Callahan
- 4/12 Chris Batson
- 4/14 Sharon Klipp
- 4/17 Nathanael Batson
- Emily Larsen
- Sarah Kohl
- 4/?? Yvonne Batson
- Dorothy Evertsen



4/7 Chester & Evelyn Gilbert



A mother took her three-year-old daughter to church for the first time. The church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. All was quiet until the little one started to sing in a loud voice, "Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you...."

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" "Because white is the color of happiness and today is the happiest day of her life," her mother tried to explain, keeping it simple. The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So, why's the groom wearing black?"

During an impassioned sermon about death and final judgement, the pastor said forcefully, "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement." Glancing down at the front pew, he noticed a man with a big smile on his face. The minister repeated his point louder. "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!" The man nodded and smiled even more. This really got the preacher wound up. He pounded the pulpit emphatically when he came to the ultimatum: "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!!!" Though everyone else in the congregation was looking somber, the man in front continued to smile. Finally the preacher stepped off the platform, stood in front of the man and shouted, "I said each member of this church is going to die!" The man grinned from ear to ear. After the service was over, the preacher made a beeline for the man. "I don't get it," the preacher said in frustration. "Whenever I said, 'Each member of this church is going to die,' your smile got bigger. Why?" "I'm not a member of this church," the man replied.

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. B. (Matthew 26:14-16)
2. D. (Matthew 14:13-21)
3. A. (2 Samuel 12:24)
4. B. (Exodus 7-11)
5. C. (Genesis 5:27)