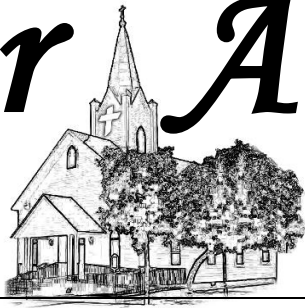


For All The Saints



The Epistle of St. Paul Lutheran Church, The Grove, Texas

October 2017

Dear Fellow Redeemed:

“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”
(Psalm 46:10 ESV)

In our world today those are very important words to heed and to share with others. Why? Because we (from the oldest to the younger) are overwhelmed with the things going on. I was told in Confirmation class a week ago Wednesday that EIGHT major disasters had taken place in the preceding two weeks. The young children know that and feel the stress. The young adults know that and feel the stress. The older adults know that and feel the stress. The old folks know that and feel the stress.

People are asking what it all means. Is this maybe the sign of the end of time? If you listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:3-14 that is exactly what we have going on right now. Allow me to share a very long verse with you.

³ As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

If that is not a picture of our world today, I don't know what is. Hurricanes; fires; tornadoes; famines; rogue nations with nuclear bombs that can make it to American soil; persecution for the faith; beheadings; hatred among people of various races and creeds; false teachers all over the place; betrayal of one another to protect one's hide; lawlessness as many do whatever it is they please; and through it all, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and God's great love for all people evidenced in the death and resurrection of our Savior is being proclaimed to many.

And that takes us back to the words we started with. *Be still.* Two very hard words for people of every age to hear. From the child who seems to be constantly in motion, to you and me who may have slowed down just a little bit, but are still constantly in motion, if not physically, then mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Thus the sleepless nights that need a pill to put us to sleep and the fretful days that wear us out.

How do we *be still*? That is a good question because even when I am still I am not still. I put aside time to read the Bible, thinking I will quiet my mind and be still, but I am not. I think I will be still for just a few minutes and read a devotion or say a little prayer, but I am not. Even when I (and I suspect you are the same as I), put some time aside to read our Bibles in the morning or during the day, or before bed, I rush through it and check it off of my "to do list" for the day and get on to the next thing. And even while I am going through the motion so I can check it off, I am wondering who it is who just sent me a text, or what the email says that just pinged in, or what is next on the calendar for today.

And then Satan whispers to me (and for some reason I can always hear his voice), that if I am not "doing something productive", if I am just sitting around reading my Bible, I am not earning my keep around here and there will be someone who will have something to say about that.

So, I ask you, when was the last time you were truly *still* in the presence of God?

When was the last time you gave Him an hour of your undivided attention? Don't say last Sunday in church.

When was the last time you gave Him 15 minutes or even 5 minutes?

You may be thinking, I don't even know how to be still for 5 minutes. After all, five minutes seems like forever. Even one minute, say when the pastor stops praying and says we can pray for those people we name in our heart. One minute seems like it is about 55 seconds too long. Again we may think, we don't need to waste time doing this. We need to keep this church service moving so we can get out of here at a decent hour, and I need to get this letter wrapped up because I don't have time Pastor to keep reading.

So, here is your challenge. Find some time today (not during the sermon this morning as you are reading this) to take five minutes to turn off the TV, put the cell phone somewhere where you won't hear messages ping in, away from the computer (unless that is where you devotion is, but that is tempting not really to be still), not thinking about what you still need to do, or what is on the calendar to do tomorrow, and relax. Let go of all of these things and just *be still*. Be quiet and focus on the incredible greatness of your Heavenly Father, and the love that He has for you in Christ Jesus. Spend those minutes praising Him and worshipping Him and praying to Him.

Is it going to be easy? No way. Those five minutes will seem like forever the first time you try it. But spend five minutes each day with your Father, not because I said you have to, or so you can check something off your list, but so that you can spend a little time with the one who loves you dearly. And as you get comfortable with five minutes, maybe extend it to ten minutes. Before long, you might even be able to give 30 minutes in conversation with the one who has blessed us with everything.

In HIS service and yours,

Hebrews 13:20-21

Grace and peace Sisters and Brothers in Christ,



Can you believe it's already the end of September! Praise be to God that we've made significant progress over the last 9 months and God continues to bless our efforts at Fortress! I thank God for your faithful financial and prayer support.

Here's a quick update on the finances. We currently have over \$125,000 in the bank with monthly net expenses of approximately \$1900 with the largest expense being payroll costs. Over the last 3 ½ months our average donations have been approximately \$3500 per month from sponsoring and supporting congregations and \$1300 per month from other sources. After we obtain a space to meet, those expenses are expected to increase significantly.

Speaking of a meeting place... we are continuing the search for a place to have weekly gatherings. We've researched theaters, other schools, city meeting spaces, fellowship halls of other churches, and available business properties through realtors. At this time, we have a few possibilities but no firm commitments. Please continue to pray for the right space to open up! Our hope is to start meeting weekly by the end of October.

We still have not received anything concrete concerning the land purchase contract. The owner has indicated that he is working on getting all the signatures. To prepare for completing the due diligence prior to closing, we have sent out Request for Qualifications to architectural firms provide by the architect associated with LCEF. Again, no dollars will be spent on anything until a firm contract is in hand.

We continue to focus on being in the community. This month we volunteered at the Harker Heights Chamber Wine and Brew fest and also started a new study using the book "Good Faith" by Kinnaman and Lyons. It's prompted great discussions and learnings on how to reach the people of this culture when they think Christians are irrelevant and extreme.

Please pray for the following:

1. Wisdom and discernment concerning a place to meet and the property.
2. Workers for the harvest and people to experience refuge in Christ through Fortress.
3. Continued, generous financial support for our mission efforts.
4. Thanksgiving for all God has provided so far!

A word of encouragement to us all...

James 1:2-4 (ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jerry

REFORMATION DAY CELEBRATION

This once in a lifetime service will take place at Grace Lutheran Church (1007 Bacon Ranch Road, Killeen, Texas 76542) on Sunday, October 29th, beginning at 3:00 p.m. All of the churches of our Circuit and area have been invited to join us.

Rev. Dr. Yohannes Mengsteab will be the Guest Preacher for the day. Dr. Mengsteab is our Mission and Ministry Facilitator for the Texas District of the LCMS in our area. He is an incredible speaker and has an incredible story to tell. He has a great passion to reach the lost with the Good News that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. Those who have heard him speak are very impressed by his zeal and enthusiasm. There will also be a joint choir made up of members of the area churches.

Following the service we are going to offer a time of food and fellowship in Grace's Fellowship Hall. Ricky and Tana Snoddy have agreed to cater the evening meal for us. It will consist of brisket, chicken, a couple of kinds of beans, potato salad and all the trimmings (if my memory serves me correctly). The cost for the meal will be \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children 4-10 years of age, and free for those under the age of 4. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex (entry way) on which you can let us know you will be enjoying the evening meal with us. This will help in our planning. As always, if you have any questions, please let me know.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE AT ST. PAUL

Our next Contemporary Worship service will be SATURDAY, October 14th. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and be filled with many of your favorite contemporary songs.

The service will be "Lutheran" through and through as we sing contemporary hymns, hear the Word of God proclaimed to us, confess our faith in the historic words of the Creed, and receive the forgiveness of our sins that our Heavenly Father has to offer to each of us.

So, think of whom you will invite to this service and mark the date on your calendar so that you can be sure to join us.

We will be blessed once again to have the group New Revelation leading us in our singing. The members of this group are Kris and Peggy Sharp; Josh and Kirsten Watson; Tony and Renee Wightman; and Dinorah Feliciano.

FIRST FAMILY CELL GROUP OF THE NEW SCHOOLYEAR – OCTOBER 14th

Get ready to join us for our Family Cell Group Bible Study. We will continue to meet on the second Saturday of each month so that we can then worship together at the Contemporary Worship Service which begins at 7:00 p.m. The plan is to eat together beginning at 5:00 p.m. Then, at 5:45 p.m., we will start our study. After our study, we encourage everyone to stay for the Contemporary Service beginning at 7:00 p.m. We strongly encourage all families with children from **pre-school through high school** to join us to listen and teach God's Word in both serious conversations and fun activities. We will have small internal family discussions, large group family discussions, and activities and/or games. If you have any questions please talk to Doug and Mellissa Boswell.

F.A.C.T. (Friends and Christ Together) 5th-8th graders

Our October outing will be to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco. We will meet there at 8:45 a.m. for a tour of the complex, for some time in Bible study, and just to have time enjoying our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you have any questions, please visit with Mellissa Boswell, our FACT Group coordinator.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS – 3 YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER

This learning opportunity happens in the **nursery** in the **FAC**. Parents are welcome to join their children learning about and praising God. If you have any questions, please contact Rebekah Morrow. If you have children in this age group I would strongly encourage you to be here with them to learn even more about Jesus at this tender age. ***Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*** (Matt 19:14)

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The MPR Sunday Bible class is studying the Augsburg Confession, which was presented on June 25, 1530. It is a study of the foundational teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and is a celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (October 31, 1517). In the coming Sundays in October, the class will study the Articles on *"The Marriage of Priests," "The Mass,"* and *"Confession."* On Reformation Sunday, October 29th, the class will review *"The 95 Theses,"* which was nailed to the Church door 500 years ago by Dr. Martin Luther. S/Dr. Sohns

FLOWER CHART

The Flower Chart for 2017 has been hung up in the Parish Hall. The dates that are open as this is being written are: November 12th and 19th; and December 31st. If you have any questions, ask.

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!

By Stan Dake

It's time once again to sing praises to our Lord and Savior as members of our Adult Choir!

Please consider joining us in Choir as we gear up for a season of worshipful praise through song. Choir is open to **all** and we especially encourage you to participate this year as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Practice is scheduled for 10-15-2017 and 10-22-2017, immediately following worship services. These practices will prepare us for our first presentation on 10-29-2017 (Reformation Sunday).

Thereafter, practices will be held to prepare for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas and, New Year's celebrations. Dates and time for practice will be provided to choir members in the near future and after discussion with choir members.

Texas Church Extension Fund News

Betty Tatge

On the eve of the Day of All Saints, October 31, 1517, Martin Luther reached into his tool box and took out a hammer and a nail. He went to the north door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. There he nailed up his Ninety-Five Theses protesting the abuse of indulgences.

On the 500th Anniversary of the reformation, the Texas District Church Extension Fund joined the celebration by creating the CEF Reformation Note.

What else is in the CEF tool box?

Flex Savings

Flex Savings investments are a great short-term investment. The minimum balance is only \$10. Investments and withdrawals can be made at any time without penalty.

Fixed-Rate Term Notes

One-year, three-year and five-year fixed rate notes are available with a minimum investment of \$500. Rates for these notes are fixed at the time the investment is opened.

Floating-Rate Term Notes

One-year, three-year and five-year floating-rate notes are available with a minimum investment of \$500. Rates for these notes float (change) during the term of the investment.

Individual Retirement Accounts

All individual Texas District CEF investments (FLEX, Fixed and Floating Rate Notes) may be included in a Texas District CEF IRA portfolio.

Current Interest Rates

	<u>Fixed Rate</u>	<u>Floating Rate</u>
One Year Note	1.500%	1.250%
Three Year Note	2.000%	1.625%
Five Year Note	2.250%	1.875%
Flex Savings		0.500%



Serve the Lord with Gladness! Psalm 100:2

By: Leslie Bryant

Mission Project for October

Our October mission project will be Operation Christmas Child. We will start handing out boxes on Oct 1. More information will be put in the bulletin.

Sunshine Zone Fall Rally

Date: October 7, 2017

Time: Registration begins at 9am and meeting starts at 9:30am

Speaker: Pastor Gerry Harrow, mission plant pastor

Registration Fee: \$5 per participant

Ingathering: Choices Hamilton Center – items will be sent in an email

Offering: Offering designated for Fortress

Newly Elected Officers

President: Debra Heckmann

Vice President: Janell Winkler

Gospel Outreach: Paula Bangsund

Treasurer: Sylvia Winkler

Clothing Box Coordinator: Kirsten Watson

Upcoming Events

October 7 – Sunshine Zone Fall Rally, St. John Hamilton 9am

October 15 – LWML Sunday

October 17 - LWML Bible Study and business meeting, 6:30pm Multipurpose room

BE READY



**IN SEASON AND
OUT OF SEASON**

C.L.A.S.S.I.C.S. Page

By: Stan Dake

The Classics group met September 21st with 17 saints in attendance. We continued our study of “An Explanation of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism”.

This month, Pastor Heckmann led us in a discussion of the Close of the Commandments - an overview of what God has to say about all of the Commandments. And what does He say? *“I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep my commandments.”* (Exodus 20:5-6) What does this mean? Dr Martin Luther tells us: “God threatens to punish all who break His commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against Him. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should love and trust in Him and gladly do all He asks.

A central thought for us to acknowledge is that God intensely wants us to cling to Him alone. He knows us and recognizes our sin. He recognizes that if left to our own volition, we fail miserably in keeping the Commandments (He provided them so that we have a curb, a guide, and a mirror so that we receive an accurate and very real picture of our helpless state absent His love and guidance).

We learned that it is alien to God’s nature to punish any of His creation - yet, the scriptures clearly explain He is provoked to anger when he sees His children become disobedient and follow after other gods (See Judges 2:11-12). Lest we forget, we are His creation!

The bottom line is this! Our jealous God loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to fulfill the Law and as such, He redeemed us all from certain and eternal death. Thanks be to God! Because we are set free from the Law, we have the opportunity to go forth and tell others how this came to be. What a privilege to share the good news that: *“For as by the one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s (Jesus) obedience the many will be made righteous”!* With Jesus as our example and the one who empowers us, we pray that we would grow in obedience to the Father. Because of Jesus, we are at peace with the Father. May our lives reflect that in all that we do and say. In Jesus name, Amen!

After our study, we enjoyed a dinner that consisted of casseroles provided by members of the group. Desserts were provided by Sherwood Symm, Barbara Lefler and Janice Dake. We also celebrated the birthdays of Doris Symm, Wilbert Richter, Alton Riske and Stan Dake.

Next month, 10-19-2017, we will meet again and will take up the topic: Sin and Our Human Condition (a supplement to the Ten Commandments contained within our study guide). Please join us as we reflect on this most important topic.

Dinner for next month will be a German theme. It will include a main course of sausage (provided), with side dishes prepared by members of the group. Desserts will be provided by Lydia Winkler, Doris Symm, and Sherwood Symm.

Come and join us!