

St. Paul's Epistle - August 2022



Quarterly Meeting—July 24, 2022

Chairman Tim Anderson called the meeting to order. Pastor Quast gave the opening prayer.

Briefs: 1) An update on the roof was given, we are waiting on the rafters to be completed to begin the project. 2) New Sunday School materials were discussed. A Sunday School meeting for anyone interested in helping with the program will be scheduled in August. 3) It was noted that church giving has increased. 4) Membership changes were reviewed.

The Financial Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were reviewed. It was noted that our giving was up from the second quarter of 2021.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by ~ Sally Batdorf, Secretary



A Message from Pastor Quast

Greetings, People Loved by God, in the name of our Saviour, Jesus!

Last month, I gave a brief introduction and history of Luther's Small Catechism, indicating that I will be taking the time in our monthly Newsletters to delve more deeply into the teachings of the Bible that are taught in the Catechism. Therefore, this month we will begin with The Ten Commandments—specifically, the First Commandment. The First Commandment begins the First Table of the Law (comprised of the first three commandments), which deals with our relationship with God above. These commandments teach us how we are to love God properly.

The First Commandment reads, "You shall have no other gods." Luther asks in the Catechism, "What does this mean?" (always a good question to ask!). The answer, "We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things." In Exodus 20, where these commandments are given by God to Moses, we read that God gives further explanation to this commandment as well, relating to the fashioning of idols from carved images, etc., and then giving warning about God being jealous over the worship and devotion that is due to Him only.

This commandment is the first and greatest of all commandments. All other commandments flow from this one. For, if we truly did fear, love, and trust in God alone above all other things, we would not fail to love God or our neighbor whom God has also given us to love (more about that in Commandments 4-10).

Herein God teaches us that we are to love Him above all other things. Furthermore, He reveals to us exactly who He is as God—that the only true God is the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons in One divine essence. This is the only God—there is no other. Nor are there other ways to God other than through the Son, Jesus Christ who has taken on human flesh. This is important for us to remember in our pluralistic culture where it is often thought that "All paths lead to heaven," or "We all worship the same god in different forms."

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NO, beloved. God in this commandment clearly indicates this is not so. For if all other gods were really the same as Him, He would not care if we worshiped them, and yet He strictly forbids such false worship. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." St. John in the Revelation (9:20) writes, "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk..."

Sadly, ever since the Fall of Adam and Eve into sin, human beings have been creating and worshipping gods of our own imagination, even demons, at times. This is a dreadful error, for there is only forgiveness, life, and salvation in the One True God. All other paths lead to eternal suffering and death in hell.

Of course, not all idolatry is so brazen as worshipping carved images of stone or wood. Our greatest idols are those things that we fear, love, or trust in above God Himself. Often, these idols may even be good gifts of God that He has given to us in our lives, but which we in our sinful rebellion have twisted to the highest places in our hearts: money, possessions, power, health, friends, family, etc. To have anything in our lives before God is to have an idol, which means, beloved, that we are ALL guilty of breaking this commandment, each and every day of our lives.

God calls us to repent of this great sin and error. He calls us in love and mercy to turn away from these vain and worthless idols, which cannot save or help us, and to turn to Him as the ultimate source of all goodness and blessings. We rightly fear God when we hold Him as the highest being, honoring Him with our lives, and ordering our lives in accordance with His Word. We properly love Him above all things when we cling to Him alone as our God and devote ourselves to His service. And we trust in Him when we fully commit our lives to Him and rely on Him for help in every time of need.

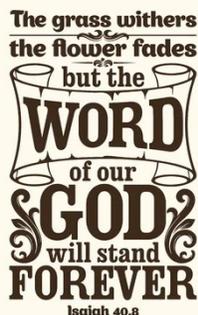
This is what we are called to as Christians—a lively and rich faith in the One Triune God who has claimed us as His own dear children and provides for us in every circumstance. We hold on to His Word as the greatest treasure, wherein He has instructed us in all things that are pleasing to Him—how we are to love Him and our neighbor—and He guides us to avoid those things that are contrary to His Word and will.

Jesus alone has kept God's Word and commandment perfectly. Jesus alone worshiped God purely and rightly. He did so for you and me. So that by faith in Him, Jesus' perfect fear, love, and trust in God might be yours and mine. That the Father may now look upon us in favor, showering us with His blessings, because of Jesus who loved Him perfectly in our stead, and who suffered and died for our lack of fear, love, and trust. We now rejoice in every opportunity to strive to keep God's Word and commandments because of His great love for us.

What joy and comfort this brings to us. That we have such a loving God who leads us to fear Him, love Him, and trust in Him above all things. The mercy of the cross is a beacon to the One true God. May we be bold in sharing who this wondrous God is, and what He has done, with those who have not yet heard!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me (cell – 218.324.1948). I pray for you all, daily. May God's grace be upon you, now and always.

Yours In Christ,
Rev. J. Quast
Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, International Falls, Minnesota
Pastor, The Church of the Lutheran Hour, Fort Frances, Ontario



The grass withers
the flower fades
but the
WORD
of our
GOD
will stand
FOREVER
Isaiah 40.8

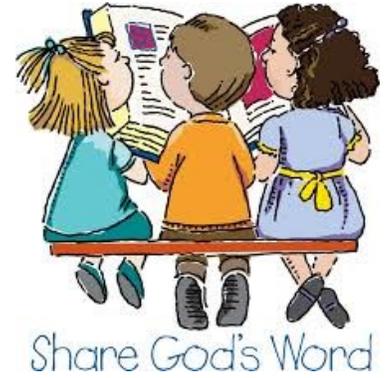
Sunday School Update!

On Sunday, August 21st at 8:15 a.m. we'll be having a meeting about our upcoming Sunday School year and new materials.

Our new Sunday School curriculum, Enduring Faith, features a planning guide, openings for each week, options for older and younger children, a supply list, activity pages and snack ideas, making it easy to prepare for. The first week starts with creation, and together, our church family will learn key Bible accounts and give foundational learning of how God's plan of salvation all began.

Sunday School will begin on September 11th. Classes will run from 10 to 10:45 a.m. A sign up sheet will be available at the meeting to pick which Sunday works best for everyone who can help.

If you cannot attend the meeting but would still like to help, just call the church office or talk to Pastor Quast. Thanks in advance for helping with our program, we're going to have a great year!



Lawn Care List—August 2022

July 31-August 6: Richard, Ryan, Ralph and Joe Christie

August 7-13: Tony, Brett and Adam Lucek, Dave Wright

August 14-20: Randy, Rick and Ken Leerssen

August 21– 27: Steve Rutkowsky, Roger Hasbargen and Leonard Morrison

August 28-September 3: Gary Buffington, George Aitchison and John Hopkins

August Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes to these members celebrating their special day!

2nd: Randy Leerssen

20th: Gary Germain

7th: Leanna Hasbargen, Jack Hasser, Jaden Toth

23rd: Tim Anderson & Harry Batdorf

11th: Neil Manninen

29th: Michelle Koenig

13th: Pastor Quast

30th: Laika Swenson

15th: Cody Kelly and Alyana Koenig

16th: Ruth Andrade

18th: Steve Bacon & Gavin Christie

19th: Cheryl Rutkowsky & Nikki Toth





Dear Friends in Christ,

AUGUST -- Named to honor the first Roman emperor (and grandnephew of Julius Caesar), Augustus Caesar (63 B.C.– A.D. 14). Augustus (the first Roman emperor) comes from the Latin word “augustus,” meaning venerable, noble, and majestic. Venerable, noble and majestic.

Hmmm. Those 3 words do not come to my mind as I think about August. I think about county fairs and High School football practice starting. Back to school sales, last minute family vacations, harvesting corn on the cob, detassling corn, baling hay, shopping for school clothes and school supplies. Hot, dry, and sad that the summer break is almost over but excited that a new school year IS about to begin. Kick the can played

with neighborhood friends as the sky darkens in the evening and the fireflies blink in the night air.

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.”

August – venerable, noble and majestic. 3 words that do a better job of describing God than a month. We get to witness His handiwork all around us as we contemplate the work of His hands. This ancient world is His handiwork. In the beginning, God said “Let there be...” and all of this came into being. We witness planting, and crops growing, maturing, getting ready for the harvest. All by HIS design. I think about the human body fueled by the food we eat, the sun, the water and all of this intricate design. There is this awesome balance of life that points to a designer that made all of these things with interdependence on each other that they just couldn’t happen by chance through random events. These were all put into place by our God who was here before the mountains – from everlasting to everlasting – our eternal God. The Psalmist (Psalm 8) looked into the night sky at the sparkling stars and wondered – “What is man that you are mindful of him?” We seem like just a little speck in the cosmos of space. Yet, God sent His Son to redeem us through His life, death and resurrection. God was mindful of our sinful condition and provides for us a Savior. In all of this, what is our response? The Psalmist in Psalm 90 prays that God would teach him to number his days and to establish the work of our hands – yes, establish the work of our hands. We are reminded that we have been bought at a price and that we are not our own. Ephesians 2 says that we are saved by grace and not of works. But as we continue to read Ephesians 2, that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t do anything, but that we should do the work that God had created us for. We work, not for our salvation, but to His honor and to His Glory. We are witnesses of His grace. We proclaim salvation by all that we say and all that we do. We speak the Word of God’s love to our family and to our neighbors.

Today, I had a conversation with a man who was contemplating taking his own life. He was in pain. He sees the evil in the world around him and concludes that life is not worth living. He wants to end his pain and be freed from the corruption and evil of this world. I shared the words of Jesus in 2 Corinthians 12 – “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” God’s grace is sufficient doesn’t mean that you will have a care free life and experience no difficulties or pain. Through all of this – His strength sustains you through the pain and you are able to witness to that hope that is yours in Christ Jesus to an evil and corrupt world. You are His witness. The power of God’s grace, especially when you are going through difficult times is a powerful witness to people who are lost and aimless in this world. We have hope that goes beyond this world. We have hope in an everlasting God whose creative power is evident all around us. We are in AWE. We know this AWESOME God through His Son Jesus. Jesus experienced our pain, suffered for our sins – died and rose again. We say: “To God be the Glory.”

In his Service, Rev. Jeffrey A. Lee

MN North District office
