

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Ascension

Lord of Life Ascension Day service #1 is in the books and was a great success! Thanks to all who participated in the service on May 29, especially our musicians. If you missed the service, you can go back and watch it on our YouTube channel, just go to YouTube and search: PlanoLutheran. One of my favorite parts of the service (in addition to the incense!) was the hymns. Let me tell you the story of one Ascension Day hymn in particular.

The hymn, *Up through Endless Ranks of Angels* was written by Jaroslav Vajda. Vajda was a Lutheran pastor and hymn writer of Slavic descent. According to his Wikipedia page: "Vajda did not write his first hymn until age 49. From that time until his death in 2008 at age 89, he wrote over 200 original and translated hymns that appear worldwide in more than 65 hymnals." Ten of those hymns are included in our hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book*, and a few are especially well-known and loved: *Go, My Children, with My Blessing*, and *When You Woke That Thursday Morning*. I had the privilege to meet Vajda on a couple of occasions, and when I was in college, our choir honored him with a special concert in which we sang a number of his songs.

When Vajda wrote *Up through Endless Ranks of Angels*, it was at the request of Augsburg Publishing House with the intent of pairing it with a tune by a Norwegian composer, called OUR LADY TRONHEJM. For some reason, in 1978 when the hymn was published in Augsburg's Lutheran Book of Worship, it was paired with Henry V. Gerike's tune, ASCENDED TRIUMPH –the same tune it is paired with in our hymnal.

Henry Gerike is an ordained Lutheran pastor and musician and a dear friend of mine. Henry and I met when I was in seminary and he was director of the seminary choirs. I sang in the Lutheran Hour Choir and we have remained friends ever since. Henry played the organ at my ordination in July of 2000 and a month later at my installation at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Pomona, CA. In 2016 he participated in a worship conference at Lord of Life. Henry once told me that he composed the tune ASCENDED TRIUMPH in response to some sort of contest to find the best tune for Vajda's hymn, *Up Through Endless Ranks of Angels*. He said he composed the opening lines of the tune to literally ascend and thus match the theme of Vajda's magnificent words. I did some research to try and learn about the hymn contest, but could not find anything to verify Henry's story. What's more, Vajda's hymn is ©1974, but Gerike's tune is ©1973! I would love to ask my friend how this is possible, but unfortunately, Henry is now in the advanced stages of Parkinson's and his memory is not so good.

The hymn is a favorite of mine. The text is captivating and the tune is fun to sing. Since it is looking very likely that Ascension Day service will be a new annual tradition at Lord of Life, I look forward to singing this hymn every year when we celebrate Christ's return to His glorious kingdom where He is seated at the Father's right hand.

491 Up through Endless Ranks of Angels

Up through endless ranks of angels,
Cries of triumph in His ears,
To His heav'nly throne ascending,
Having vanquished all their fears,
Christ looks down upon His faithful,
Leaving them in happy tears.

Death-destroying, life-restoring,
Proven equal to our need,
Now for us before the Father
As our brother intercede;
Flesh that for our world was wounded,
Living, for the wounded plead!

To our lives of wanton wand'ring
Send Your Spirit, promised guide;
Through our lives of fear and failure
With Your pow'r and love abide;
Welcome us, as You were welcomed,
To an endless Eastertide.

Oh, to breathe the Spirit's grace!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Oh, to see the Father's face!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Oh, to feel the Son's embrace!



A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Be forewarned, this is a long one. :)

The Christian Church has always been at odds with the world around it. June marks the beginning of what the secular world labels as “Pride” month - bastardizing God’s rainbow (His covenantal sign to Noah) and His purposeful design (or teleology) for sex and gender. As a result of sin, mankind has tried to determine what its purpose is and has striven to orient the way people live and act in their everyday roles according to ever-changing worldly “truths.” Over time, the world’s cultural understandings on topics such as gender roles, women’s rights, and the like have begun to change - and to seep into the Christian Church itself. These ideas and movements of what society labels as “true” has led to a rise in questions regarding laypeople’s roles within the Church, and more controversially, what women’s roles ought to be in the Church. How should women serve in the church? To what extent can this service go? What roles have they held historically and what might this mean for women in the church today? Ultimately, the question at hand is, “In what ways can a faithful woman serve in the church in a God-pleasing manner?” This question is especially important for members of the LCMS, as we hold to the infallibility and constancy of God’s Word despite living in an ever-changing world.

To answer these questions, one must first go to Scripture to learn more about the order of creation. God is a God of order, not of chaos or confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), and as such, He clearly lays out His teleology for mankind in the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:28). In the beginning, God created man and woman in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) – they were the *imago Dei*. Our favorite question to ask as Lutherans is “What does this mean?” What does it mean that God created the first man and woman – Adam and Eve – in His image? This means that, although men and women are not like God in a physical sense, and they differ from one another physically, God created men and women to be spiritually equal in His sight (LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations. “Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice.”, 19). As evidenced in Gen. 1:26, both man and woman were given the charge to be good, faithful stewards of God’s creation.

If they were both given this duty, what difference is there between man and woman in God’s eyes? They are both certainly spiritually equal in God’s sight and are to share in the same work of good stewardship, however, God created woman to be man’s *ezer kenegdo*, or “helper” (Gen. 2:18). Man is to have headship over woman. This does not mean that a woman’s role is less important than a man’s by any means. In fact, God knew it was not good for man to be alone and that he needed a helper fit for him, and Adam immediately rejoiced and recognized Eve as “...bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:18-23). God created men and women to be distinct from one another, to complement each other, and to work alongside each other in an orderly way to fulfill their teleology to serve God by caring for His creation and bringing glory to His name.

So, what happened to this perfect, orderly plan? Sin entered the picture, making it impossible for man and woman to perfectly fulfill their roles in creation peacefully. God told the woman that “...your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). This helps explain why many both in and outside of the church have questions regarding women’s roles in the church, especially when grappling with difficult passages such as 1 Cor. 14:33-35 (“...the women should keep silent in the churches...”) and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 (“... I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet...”).

Now, Paul isn’t making these statements out of ill-will towards women participating in the church. The words he uses in these texts do not mean that a faithful woman cannot speak or teach in her congregation, but rather, she is not to preach in a manner of authority above - or in place of - the pastoral office. When comparing these texts with passages such as 1 Cor 12:12-31 (“Unity and Diversity in the Body”) or even the rest of 1 Cor. 14 (“Intelligibility in Worship” and “Good Order in Worship”), we see that his was not a directive against women in auxiliary leadership roles, but rather for all people to uphold orderliness within the congregations.

These passages, plus the idea that husbands are to be the “head” over their wives and wives are to “submit” may initially make a person feel uneasy, however, God did not design it this way arbitrarily. Just as God is the head over the man (and woman), man is to be the head of his wife (1 Cor. 11:3). Women are to submit, or trust, that their husbands want what is best for them and to stand beside him along the way, just as we the Church are to trust our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:22-30). This was as true for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as it is for faithful men and women of the church today.

Now that we have a sense of God’s orderly design for men and women, what does it mean to serve Him in the church? Faithful women have held a wide range of roles within the Church for centuries. (I had originally written two paragraphs full of examples from Scripture, but then decided to delete that because this is by far the longest newsletter article I’ve written and that you’ve read...my apologies. If you get this far and still want my list, I can email it to you.

☺)

Women were not simply passive members of the Church, but God led them to play key roles at both the forefront and behind the scenes of Christian ministry. However, it is important to note that nowhere in Scripture are women shown to have been acting in the role of a priest or an apostle. This brings us back to God’s design of man to be the head of his wife and the impact that sin had on this teleology. When sin is involved, living according to the roles God intended becomes harder, if not impossible, for us to do perfectly. If men and women are unable or flat out refuse to live according to their design, they are not living godly lives, and are in a sense, not living properly as the “image of God.” This shouldn’t come as a surprise, as this is all of us, every time we fall short of His plan. The Good News is He’s taken this into account already (Eph. 1:7-8).

While there are some within the Church today who try to make arguments for the ordination of women in the name of “equality” and “justice”, we know from Scripture that not even all men are qualified or called to be apostles, prophets, teachers, or pastors (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Cor. 12:29; Eph. 4:11). We in the LCMS let Scripture interpret Scripture, rather than ascribing secular “truths” to God’s Word. Even when we read difficult passages such as 1 Cor. 14:33-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15, we know that they are not diminishing the worth and dignity of women, but upholding God’s design for men and women. One excellent read on the subject of women’s ordination is from the Concordia Commentary series on 1 Corinthians (ask Pastor or myself for a copy of this, if you like! Be warned...the section I’m referencing is longer than this newsletter article). A quote from this commentary that I especially like is actually from a supporter of women’s ordination, C. R. Klein, who gives her own concern about the contemporary women’s movement. She says...

“We fall into the trap set by our culture when we measure our worth primarily by what the world deems accomplishment. ...Have we not pinned women’s ultimate worth to their ‘works,’ so that, like the Pelagians of the fifth century, we equate human effort with God’s salvation?”

When we divorce ourselves from the truth of God’s Word, and try to force it to fit the world’s mold, we lose something of immense value - His purposeful design for men and women to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church. As beloved and created children, the distinction between men and women is not based on the secular world’s arbitrary “truths”, but rather on how God has created men and women to complement each other in their respective roles and design. We are each given different gifts and each called to different vocations, but it’s not what we do that makes our lives worthy of His love, but His love that makes our lives worth living. Unlike what the secular world says, we have nothing to be “Proud” of, except for the gift of His Son that He so graciously lavished upon us, His Bride.

In Christ’s love,

Julie Baumann

Deaconess Intern

Teen Times

“Confirmation or Graduation?”

On Sunday, June 15, the Rite of Confirmation will take place for two young ladies at Lord of Life welcoming them as communicant members of our church. It is also one Sunday removed from when we celebrated Pentecost and the birth of the Christian Church. How cool is that to be recognizing both of these events within a week of each other? After all, they can be considered closely related. One question I like to raise with those teenagers being confirmed is “Now what?” There are times when the Rite of Confirmation can closely resemble a graduation. There are usually families and friends present, robes adorned to distinguish the confirmands, a processional into the sanctuary, special music is played or performed, certificates are presented, congratulations are given, and a plethora of pictures are taken. It sure seems to have many of the characteristics that are part of a graduation. However, I will ask the question again, but not just to the confirmands. Parents, lay leaders, grandparents, peers, and all congregation members should address the question of “now what?”

The following excerpts are from an article written by Dr. Marvin Bergman in the LCMS News, Reporter (Reporter Online) that appeared on September 1, 2010 which provides an excellent response to this question. The title is **Commentary: Confirmation – more than ‘graduation’**. Dr. Bergman was a faculty member of Concordia University Nebraska, a 1959 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and earned doctorates from Columbia University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He taught confirmation classes for 26 years. He went to be with the Lord in August 2022, but his comments in his article are still relevant today.

Why [is confirmation] important?

In my survey of 1,015 participants, confirmands reflected many of the benefits of the instruction and nurture of parents, confirmation leaders, teachers, and congregations. Some of the survey results revealed that:

- *Ninety-three percent of youth described confirmation as being very important or important.*
- *Three of four youth named growing in faith and living as a Christian as the number-one reason for being in confirmation.*
- *Ninety-eight percent of confirmands said that their faith in Jesus Christ helps them to know what is right and wrong.*
- *Ninety-eight percent of the parents said that confirmation is very important or important in the lives of their daughters and sons.*

However,

The survey found that more than nine of 10 leaders identified a “confirmation is graduation” view in their congregations.

When a schooling model is the structure for a confirmation ministry that includes grade levels, robes and diplomas, it is not surprising that the purpose of confirmation is seen as graduation. Leaders responding to the survey indicated that 41 percent of those who confirmed their faith in the rite of confirmation were active as high school seniors.

OR ROUGHLY ONLY 4 OUT OF 10!

Confirmation should be considered as a major mile marker of a marathon, not the finish line. We are prepared beforehand through Bible lessons and simple teaching in our childhood prior to confirmation classes, and are

encouraged to nurture the catechism instruction afterwards through the Word, the Sacraments and participation in ministry for the rest of our lives.

This is where parents, called church workers, lay teachers, grandparents, peers and congregations can make a huge difference. As a team, we can help young people develop a Law-Gospel view of God's character as a seeking and sending God, be clear about their identity as disciples of Jesus Christ, be grasped by the power of the Gospel, stand on the solid foundation of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, have a vision of one's role in the mission of Christ's church and live daily in the light of one's Baptism.

Being a new person in Christ happens through nurture and instruction based on Word and Sacraments. When confirmation contributes to this aim, isn't this a blessing to celebrate?

To Ana and Emily Scarth, we wish you God's blessings on the next steps of your spiritual journey and pray that you will keep this in mind; this is not a graduation, it is an inauguration! Confirmation is the formal beginning of a significant part in your life as a Christian!

You can read the article from Lutheran News in its entirety at:

<https://reporter.lcms.org/2010/commentary-confirmation-more-than-a-graduation/>

Until next time, God bless.

Scott Peters



Shannon Nuschler

Memorial Day, May 26, began with a sad surprise: Shannon Nuschler had passed away peacefully sometime early that morning. Shannon had been experiencing serious decline in her health for months, but when I received the news of her death, I was still shocked. Her death did not seem imminent, but evidently, the Lord had other plans. In this case, His plan was to call Shannon home sooner rather than later and to grant her a very peaceful passing. (Who among us wouldn't choose to die in our sleep?)

Shannon and Gary Nuschler have been a part of Lord of Life since the earliest days. Our congregation was incorporated in May of 1990, and Gary, Shannon and their son and daughter officially joined the next year. Shannon was active in music and in children's ministry. Born in New Orleans, Shannon was a lifelong Lutheran and faithfully attended church throughout her life. Her confirmation verse was John 10:10b which records Jesus saying: "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly." This was the theme of her funeral sermon on Saturday, May 31st. The funeral was well attended. The next day would have been Gary and Shannon's 51st wedding anniversary. Please keep Gary and his family in your thoughts and prayers in the months ahead.

Rooted in Christ, Growing in Stewardship

The heartland is now awash in various hues of green. The doldrums of winter give way to the colors of spring. Now, the promise of spring gives way to the growth of summer. Fields are planted and sprouted. Gardens are planted. Flowers adorn the beds of neighborhood homes and roadside ditches. Green is the shade of life!

Green growth is also the hue of the faithful steward. The seed of faith planted in human hearts in the waters of Holy Baptism grows as it is nurtured in the Word proclaimed and ingested in the Holy Supper. This faith does indeed save. But our stewardship of the Gospel is also designed to bear fruit for God's glory and the benefit of our neighbor.

To consider this, let us look at the hymn, "Fruitful Trees, the Spirits Sowing" (LSB 691). It is very much a stewardship hymn!

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase, Fruit to life eternal growing, rich in love and joy and peace.

- The tree of faith is not planted in us by us. It is the Spirit's work! We do not claim the title "steward." Rather, we are created for it (Gen. 1:26–28).
- He is the One who makes it grow in us. The fruits of the Spirit are borne out because we, by grace through faith, are connected to the vine that is Jesus (John 15).

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless; Here is fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

- Our stewardship is NOT about what we do. It is about what the Holy Spirit does in and through us. That is the fruit that we bear. His fruit for His purposes.
- But that fruit is lived out through us. The world sees the fruit of our stewardship of the Gospel in lives lived connected to Word and Sacrament.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master; Christ our pattern and our goal, Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self-control.

- Stewards have been created and redeemed to reflect the image of Jesus in the world. He is the pattern. We reflect to others around us the Light of the Gospel He has shone on us.
- This reflection comes when Christ's goodness flows from us to others.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, May we grow till harvests cease; Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.

- Just as the Spirit has created us for stewardship of the Gospel, so also does He cause our faithfulness! He calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and KEEPS us in this faithful stewardship of the Gospel.
- The ultimate goal of our faithful stewardship is eternity. For us. For our neighbor. All worked out by the Spirit.

Green is the color of the world right now. It is also the color of our stewardship and it is growing in us as we are connected to the vine, Jesus! God grant our growth in Him!



2 Kevin & Jan Doughtie (52)
4 Sean Tweedie
6 John & Linda Francis (61)
8 Scott & Jonelle Peters (34)
10 AJ & Tasie Kade (8)
14 Tim Wood
14 Jack & Nelda Schrank (67)
16 Vivian Bennett
16 George Munden
16 Larry & Judy Dibbern (63)
19 Thomas George
20 Kaitlyn Hacker
20 Mark & Carrie Ziegelbein (27)
21 Sally Barr
21 Athan Shaltanis
21 Tony Vess
21 Karl & Debbie Olsen (50)
21 Pastor Joel & Phaedra Shaltanis (28)
23 John & Vicki Frinksko (41)
24 Sue Parson
26 Samson Carter
29 Melanie Scarth
29 Helen Wozniak
30 Greg Moudy

Lord of Life Small Groups

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth
BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meets one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or speters@planolutheran.com
- † Usually meets on Saturday a month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., June 12 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

YOUNG ADULTS

- † For those in their 20's and 30's
- † For info contact Lauren Moudy at laurenmoudy@gmail.com or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, June 20 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner

Deaconess Intern, **Paige Rebber**, will be visiting Lord of Life on Sunday, June 22nd. This is just a preliminary visit for her to learn more about our congregation and our community. She will not be officially installed until August.

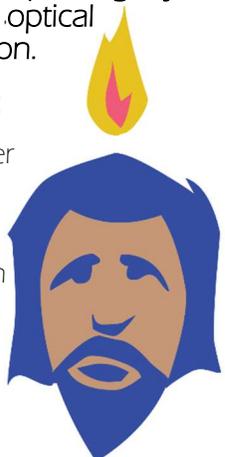


Spirit SPINNER

For Pentecost, make a thaumatrope, a spinning toy that creates an optical illusion of motion.

What you need:

- White Paper
- Cup
- Scissors
- Hole Punch
- Pencil and Markers
- Glue
- String



What you do:

1. Using the cup's circular shape, trace two identical circles on the paper and carefully cut them out.
2. In pencil draw a person's head on one circle. Then place the blank circle on top and use the image beneath to guide you in drawing a flame above the head.
3. Color the two images with markers
4. Apply glue to the backs of the circles together, aligning the head and flame at opposite sides.
5. Punch holes on either side of the head near the edges of the circles.
6. Cut two lengths of string and run each through a hole. Spin with your fingers, one string in each hand.



prepare for worship in june

June 1: Seventh Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 1:12-26; Rev. 22:1-6 (7-11) 12-20; John 17:20-26
HotD: "Christ Is the World's Redeemer," 539

June 8: The Day of Pentecost

Texts: Gen. 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21; John 14:23-31
HotD: "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord," 497

June 15: The Holy Trinity

Texts: Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; John 8:48-59
HotD: "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest," 498

June 22: Second Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Is. 65:1-9; Gal. 3:23-4:7; Luke 8:26-39
HotD: "Rise, Shine, You People," 825

June 29: Third Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: 1 Kings 19:9b-21; Gal. 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62
HotD: "'Come, Follow Me,' the Savior Spake," 688



June 14th is the last day to sign up to be a part of the *Prof Insights* lecture series taught by professors at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. On June 30-July 2, Lord of Life will be hosting Rev. Dr.

Rick Marrs. His topic is: "The Provocative Sixth Commandment or Care of Souls in a Sexualized Society." The cost of the workshop is \$150. Click the following link for more information.

www.csl.edu/event/prof-insights-marrs-in-plano-tx