

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### Father Abraham

When I was a kid, we used to sing a silly song at Vacation Bible School and Church Camp that was kind of like the “Christian Hokie-Pokie.” We would stand up and march in place and sing: “Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham, and I am one of them and so are you, so let’s just praise the Lord.” After this verse, we would add some part of the body to our “marching”, like right arm, left arm, etc. and then repeat the verse over and over. I realize now this was probably invented by camp counselors or Sunday school teachers as a way to get a bunch of squirmy kids up and moving around so they might sit still afterwards for a lesson. I thought it was just a silly song and never gave it much thought. But as it turns out there was more to it than I thought...

October 9<sup>th</sup> is the commemoration of Abraham and as such, I have been thinking about Father Abraham. At our most recent men’s retreat, we did a comprehensive Bible study on Abraham, reading a little from all 15 chapters of Genesis in which he is mentioned. There are several key stories about Abraham’s life, but the central theme is that God called Abraham to go to the Promised Land and God promised to make him the father of a great nation, and that through him all nations on earth would be blessed. [Genesis 12:1-3] Abraham believed God and obeyed him even though he was an old man and his wife, Sarah, was barren. This promise would be repeated several times and each time, he “believed the LORD and it was credited to him as righteousness.” [Genesis 15:4] Abraham believed and obeyed... but not perfectly.

Abraham is the father of faith and yet he was a fallen sinner like all men so that even his faith wasn’t perfect. He struggled with sin and temptation like all of us and the older he got, the more he questioned if God would be able to fulfill His promise. At one point, and with his wife’s prodding, he decided to take matters into his own hands and produce an heir, not with his barren wife, but with his wife’s maid servant. This resulted in all kinds of strife at home, and God made it clear that that child would not be the heir. The LORD had to clarify that He does not need men intervening to get something done, for nothing is too difficult for him. [Genesis 18:14] Indeed, God miraculously opened Sarah’s womb when she was 90 years old and Abraham was 100 and together they welcomed their newborn son, Isaac.

Years after the promised child, Isaac, was given, the LORD tested Abraham with the ultimate test to sacrifice his son, and Abraham did not waver. Because he was willing to not withhold his son from Him, the LORD restated the promise to make his descendants into a great



nation and a blessing to all people on earth. [Genesis 22] Through that child, Isaac, God indeed provided many heirs to form the nation of Israel, but it was through one special descendant, Jesus, that God would eventually bless all people on earth.

You were probably familiar with the Biblical story and the fact that Jesus was a descendant of Israel, but what does all of this have to do with that silly song about Father Abraham and his many sons? Well, what makes the song, not so silly, is the bold statement, "I am one of them and so are you." I would venture to guess that most Christian kids singing that song at church camp are not of Jewish descent. So, in what way can they declare that they are Abraham's sons? For that answer, we look not to Genesis and the Old Testament, but to Romans and Galatians in the New.

Romans 4 argues that salvation is received through faith and the argument is almost entirely based on the statement, "Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness." Here is a sample of the larger argument:

<sup>16</sup>That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." <sup>23</sup>But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup>who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Similarly, Paul argues in his letter to the Galatians, that through faith in Christ, we are Abraham's heirs of the promise.

... for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. [Read all of Galatians 3 for context.]



What Paul is saying in these passages is that all who have been called to faith in Jesus, regardless of their bloodline and ethnicity, can say with confidence about Abraham's children: "I am one of them and so are you!" In other words, no one is excluded from God's promises in Christ based on race or nationality. Christ is given for all so that all who trust in Him will have everlasting life. What a beautiful promise and one worth celebrating.

PrS



## A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

So, Sunday was a little bit of a dramatic day. For those of you who were at the 8 am service on September 28th, you had the unfortunate experience of seeing me pass out at the Communion rail. I'm sure those who attended Bible Study and the 10:45 am service heard about what happened because word spreads pretty quickly when events like these occur.

I would like to start by apologizing to everyone. What happened on Sunday is not something that usually happens, but since it did and was so public, it has caused considerable concern. I'm sorry to have sparked so much anxiety; it was never my intention to do so. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all those who came and helped me on Sunday morning. I greatly appreciate all of you who have reached out with prayers and offers of help in any way you can. You all have been such a blessing to me in my short time here, and I am beyond grateful to be surrounded by such a wealth of help, medical knowledge, and friendships.

To address what happened: I have a condition called Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, otherwise known as POTS. It is a chronic illness that mainly affects the heart. A simple way to explain it is that my heart races when I stand up or bend down, which can cause extreme dizziness, sudden changes in blood pressure, and high heart rate. Usually, when I stand up, if my symptoms are flaring, I can feel myself getting lightheaded and can sit down or lie down to help with dizziness and allow my heart rate to return to normal, and completely avoid passing out. Usually, I'll feel better within a few minutes. With proper medication, I am relatively asymptomatic and largely unaffected by the high heart rate, other than some mild chest pain. Fortunately for me, passing out like what happened on Sunday is extremely rare.

I want to assure everyone that I am receiving the proper care I need and am actively working to ensure that this does not happen again. My cardiologist in Indiana is helping me establish care in Plano. What this means is that I will be going to get some tests done to help rule out any other possible causes of my episode so that my healthcare team can determine what steps to take from here. It may be as simple as adjusting my medication, and I'm praying that that's the case. Whatever the outcome may be, the goal is to get me well so that I am able to serve you, the members of Lord of Life, with love, mercy, compassion, and consistency.

I also want to make it clear that this is not something stress-related. I very much enjoy serving you and want to continue to do so. This is also not a self-care related issue. I have worked with my doctors to determine a proper sleep, diet, and exercise regimen that keeps me healthy. POTS is a chronic condition, so even with the best regimens, sometimes things happen. The goal, though, is to keep flare-ups to the absolute minimum.

When things like this happen, the best thing to do is to get up, seek help, implement the help, and move forward as best as you can. I've gotten up (slowly and carefully, of course) with the help of the caring people here at Lord of Life. I've sought help from those with medical knowledge both here and with my existing care team. I'm implementing all the advice and help I have received and will continue to receive through the next few doctor's appointments. And now, I go forward. We go forward.

But we never go forward alone. As much as we lean on those whom God has given us in this earthly life to help us with our needs, we also lean on God Himself. His strength carries us

when we collapse. When we feel embarrassed, frustrated, frightened, and fragile, God, in His mercy, leads us to peace and rest in Him. In times when we feel like everything has gone wrong, we turn to God and cry out, "God, be merciful to me! Help me!" And He does. God sent us Jesus, the Great Physician Himself, to heal our every affliction and care for our every need. He is our Good Shepherd who restores us to Him. Although things like passing out from a chronic illness happen, or any other type of medical episode or scary scenario that life throws our way, God is still merciful to us; so merciful that He sent His Son. We can lean on Jesus and look to the cross, knowing that all things are safe in His nail-pierced hands, and He will never let us go.

The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.

He makes me lie down  
in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of  
righteousness  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy  
shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house  
of the LORD  
forever.

Psalm 23

# Teen Times

Another year of confirmation instruction for a few of the younger members in our congregation has begun. Three incoming Jr. High youth started their 6th grade instruction at the beginning of September. There are several folks at Lord of Life who have studied Luther's Small Catechism with the pastor as an adult and have been welcomed into communicant membership. However, many of you may recall your own confirmation instruction when you were growing up as a youth in your church. The memory work, the tests, the many questions and answers, and of course the final examination in front the pastor, elders, members of the congregation, or all of the above. Many of us have similar memories of the time we spent with our pastors as he walked us through the six chief parts of the catechism. Yet, not all LCMS churches conduct their catechism instruction in the exact same way. Of course the end goal is the same; to have a firm grasp on what it means to be Christian and a member of a Missouri-Synod Lutheran Church. But, the means to achieve that goal differ somewhat from parish to parish. For instance, some congregations start teaching the kids in 5th grade and some start in 7th grade. One church may take two years, another one may take three. There may be a specific syllabus or teaching curriculum used, or it might be a finish-at-your-own-pace approach. If you are not aware, I would like to share how Lord of Life approaches the confirmation instruction to our young future communicant members.

We start with the youth who are entering their 6th grade year or are about 11 years of age. The length of our instruction is 3 years; the first being an introductory year of basic topics, and the next two (7th and 8th grade years) working with the pastor to study and learn Luther's Small Catechism. I think most, if not all of you, recall your time in the catechism, but the following is a description of what our 6th grade year of instruction includes.

It starts with a 4 session study on the life and times of Martin Luther; his early years as a school boy, his education at universities, becoming a monk at a young age, his wife and family, and what led him to begin the reformation by nailing the 95 thesis to the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany. It is exciting to see the faces and reactions of our 6th graders to learn something they had never heard before when it comes to Luther and his life. As a group we then watch the movie, *Luther*, which was released in 2003. If you have not seen it, I strongly recommend that you do as it is a great depiction of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. From there we learn about what it means to worship as Lutherans. The types of liturgy, symbols used in worship, the interactions between God, the pastor and the congregation, and how colors and the church calendar play major parts in our worship style and seasons. This amount of study material usually takes 10-12 weeks, so basically the fall semester. In January, the 6th graders will begin a basic journey through The New Testament starting with the backgrounds and relations between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We discuss to whom they were written, the when, where, how, and why, as we learn more about the saving work of our Lord Jesus. From here we look at major teachings or events throughout The New Testament that have a profound impact on our faith. The calling of the first disciples, the parables of the Kingdom, Pentecost, The book of Acts and how the church grows which includes the conversion of Paul, and then general Christian instruction in Romans and Paul's letters to the Corinthians. This material rounds out the spring semester of our 6th grade confirmation year. In a nutshell, our 6th grade curriculum is good, basic teaching of our Lutheran heritage, practices, and scriptural knowledge, and a firm introduction to the next two years when catechism instruction takes place. This is my 16th year to be teaching the 6th graders as they begin their trek to becoming a communicant member at Lord of Life. Every year has been very enjoyable and given me great memories while seeing our youth learn what believe, what we say and do in worship, and what we have to look forward to as Christians and followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory!

Until next time,  
Scott Peters

## October is Pastor Appreciation Month

This is a time set aside each year to honor and give thanks for our pastor who gives, cares, and serves us in remarkable ways. St. Paul urged Christian communities to acknowledge those "who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you," holding these spiritual leaders "in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 13). Please consider taking time this month to show Pastor Shaltanis that we appreciate not only what he does, but also who he is to us and so many others

As Pastor diligently and faithfully keeps us in prayer, let us also do the same for him.

God bless,  
Charles Hacker  
Lord of Life Administrative Council President



## A Prayer for our Pastor

*Dear God, we pray for our pastor to be encouraged. We ask that you would minister to him and give him a deeper sense of hope. Send laborers into his life to extend needed help, support, and friendship. We pray that he and his family would be protected and covered by the precious blood of Jesus.*

*We pray, Lord, that our pastor would not be discouraged, or afraid, or grow weary. But instead that you would uplift his spirit, encourage him in trials, and recharge him when he is feeling overwhelmed. We ask that you would help him to put his hope in you and that you would in return renew his strength (Isaiah 40:31). We thank you for our pastor, Lord, and all the work he does for your kingdom.*

*We pray for our pastor to have motivation and vision, that ministries would continue to launch and thrive, and that he not lose one opportunity to serve and minister. We ask that you would help our pastor have a greater reach and that our church would be a beacon of light and hope throughout the world.*

*We pray that Pastor's faith would increase and that he would be drawn closer to you, Lord. We pray for our pastor to be on guard, to stand firm in the faith, to be courageous, and to be strong (1 Corinthians 16:13). May you, oh God, satisfy his thirst for you and fill him up so that he is ready at all times to do the good work you have called him to.*

*We pray over our pastor, Lord, that you would help him to lead with courage and strength. Send volunteers to lead alongside him, that he would not carry the weight alone. Help them all to be leaders marked by humility, compassion, and wisdom.*

*We thank you for our pastor and pray for your blessings and protection on him and his family.*

*Amen.*



It's time to celebrate the 508th anniversary of the Reformation, which began on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Lord of Life will celebrate this special day in Church History with a Reformation and Oktoberfest potluck after the ONE SERVICE at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday October 26th! Family Ministry will provide brats, hot dogs, hot dog buns, condiments, and beverages.

There are sign-up sheets in the narthex where you can let us know that you will be in attendance, as well as letting us know what delicious food you will bring to share. Also, if your schedule permits, there are several opportunities to help set up and clean up the fellowship hall on Saturday October 25th and/or Sunday. Bitte machen Sie mit! (Please, join us!)



## prepare for worship in october

### October 5: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Hab. 1:1-4; 2:1-4, 2 Tim. 1:1-14, Luke 17:1-10

HotD: "I Know My Faith Is Founded," 587

### October 12: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Ruth 1:1-19a, 2 Tim. 2:1-13, Luke 17:11-19

HotD: "Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old," 846

### October 19: Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

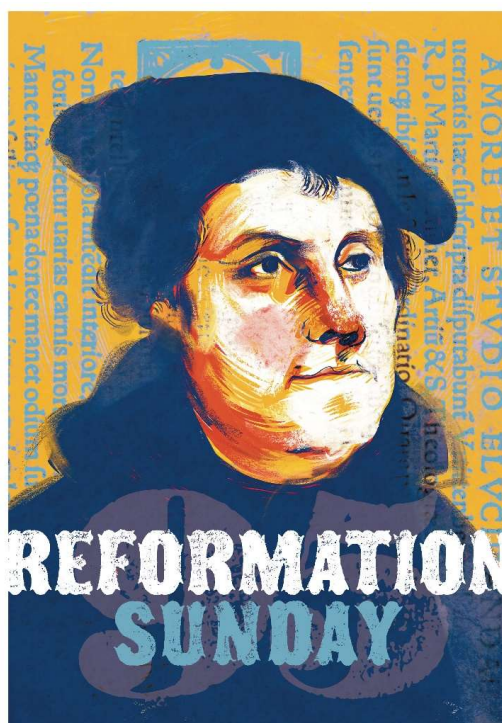
Texts: Gen. 32:22-30, 2 Tim. 3:14-4:5, Luke 18:1-8

HotD: "I Trust, O Lord, Your Holy Name," 734

### October 26: Reformation Sunday

Texts: Rev. 14:6-7, Rom. 3:19-28, John 8:31-36 or Matt. 11:12-19

HotD: "A Mighty Fortress," 656



## Harmonious Stewardship

*“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:4-5)*

One of the most forgotten concepts in stewardship is the interdependent nature that makes up the Body of Christ and the way that body supports the shared work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is experienced in the local congregation, as well as in broader mission and ministry efforts at the district and Synod levels. Yet in these words, St. Paul reminds the Romans and us that we are indeed members of one another. This is true in our worship. It is also true in our stewardship of the Gospel. Stewards of all shapes and sizes, ages and abilities, affluence and influence are all assembled around Word and Sacrament in the local congregation with no one being more important than the other.

Part of this forgetting lies in what the eyes see and how our human mind operates. Our eyes and our minds are quick to come to the erroneous conclusion that the person who writes the biggest check is the more important steward. Human logic, flawed by sin as it is, could make a claim that the youngest child or the most infirm, aged member of the congregation would certainly be considered something less than important when it comes to the stewardship of the Gospel.

Paul makes it clear in these words that this is not how stewardship of the Gospel is measured in the Body of Christ. Rather, it would be better to view local stewardship like the lost art of harmony in congregational singing. This has been lost not only due to the performative nature of the lead singers of the local praise team, but also because modern hymnals are written to almost force the novice hymn-singer into unison voice. Creative harmonization by talented organists is beautiful to listen to, but does not always support the people in the pews in singing in parts. This is a loss in demonstrating a very practical aspect of whole-body stewardship.

The sound that builds when choral and congregational singers settle into their voice parts is nothing short of heavenly! Yet when altos, tenors and bass sing their individual parts without any concept of how they fit together, the music doesn't sound as powerful. The narrow range of the typical alto line almost sounds monotonous. The tenor line can get painfully high, and the base

line can get uncomfortably low. But, when interdependently entwined, along with the melody that is so often carried by the sopranos, the music becomes a tremendously powerful tool in communicating the Gospel.

The same is true of individual stewards. Certainly, stewards with more financial means are in a unique place to “carry the tune” for ministry in a local congregation. But that doesn't rule out the faithful stewardship of the saint-like 94-year-old Hulda, who prayed for her young pastor in German every night while the aches and pains of arthritis and the grief of losing a daughter to cancer kept her awake. This does not rule out Jimmy, the profoundly developmentally disabled confirmand whose basic but dramatically eloquent confession of the faith left an impression on a congregation long after he went to be with Jesus. It doesn't rule out the single parent, the recovering addict, the family coming out of bankruptcy, the elderly widow and everyone in between.

The Lord has entrusted all the baptized with stewardship of the one thing needful: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No one member of any congregation is more important than another when it comes to this stewardship. The biggest check isn't always the best way to communicate the Gospel. In fact, it is almost always better communicated with the widow's mite, the tenacious stewardship of the talents and so much more.

In the local congregation and beyond, our corporate stewardship of the Gospel needs each other to fill out our great confession. It is not about equal amount. It is about interdependence that only the Holy Spirit can work! Each of us has a role to play, a harmony to sing. The standard for that role is faithfulness. We do not have the same function, but we have the same Jesus! As we sing the parts entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit, the sweet music of the Gospel goes out!



- 1 Mark & Kathy Plagens (48)
- 3 Frank Edelmann
- 3 Curtis Peters
- 6 Norma Martin
- 6 Gary Nuschler
- 6 Bennie & Paula Lowery (18)
- 6 Mike & Lane Montgomery (19)
- 7 Georgianna Womack
- 9 Jason & Karla Rempert (32)
- 10 Rose Moore
- 10 Emory Smith
- 10 Gary & Sarah Nuschler, Jr. (16)
- 11 Tim Ozlowski
- 14 Lane Montgomery
- 14 Travis & Elisabeth Bennett (8)
- 16 Adam Buckmeier
- 19 Mike Sparks
- 21 Scott & Wendy Cleavenger (25)
- 22 Janet Sanders
- 22 Sal & Julz Cruz (14)
- 23 Don & Paula Bunger (11)
- 24 James Wang
- 24 Mike & Sherri Kunschke (38)
- 25 Daniel Kim
- 26 Richard Barr
- 27 Jack Cleavenger
- 31 Ruth Bernhardt
- 31 Jonah Carter
- 31 Judie Dibbern
- 31 Danny Ozlowski

## Lord of Life Small Groups

### EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth  
[BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:speters@planolutheran.com)
- † Will meet Fri, October 24 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

### GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., October 11 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

### YOUNG ADULTS

- † For those in their 20's and 30's
- † For info contact Lauren Moudy at [laurenemoudy@gmail.com](mailto:laurenemoudy@gmail.com) or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, October 19 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner

