

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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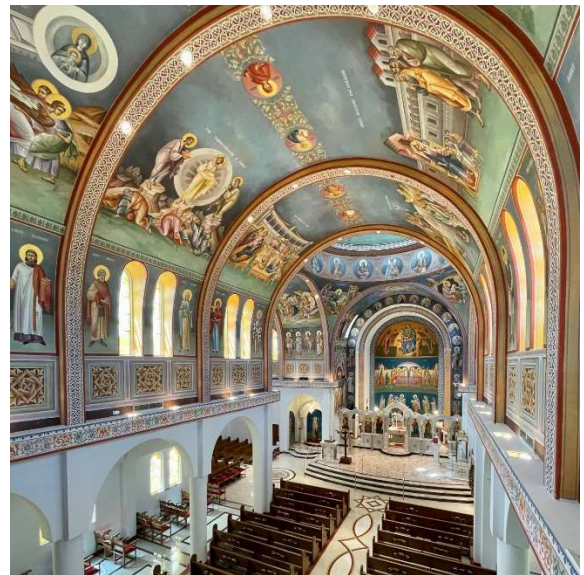
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Plano, Texas

September 2025

Pastor's Thoughts

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a baptism at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas. The first-time visitor to Holy Trinity or almost any other Orthodox church, will have their eyes drawn immediately to the walls and ceiling. (See the picture of the inside of their sanctuary on the right.) Seemingly every square inch is decorated with paintings of saints and scenes from the Bible. This is very intentional and is more than simply the result of an interior decorator's advice. You will find the same style in most Orthodox churches because the orthodox have long understood the importance of the use of art and images to teach the faith. They also correctly maintain that when you enter in such a setting, it is unlike going to an office building or a shopping mall or some other common space. The idea is to convey that you are in sacred space, something set aside for worship of the Almighty God who reigns in heaven.



Inside Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas

At times the use of icons in particular has led to great conflicts in the church, most notably the Iconoclastic Controversy c. 725-842. When a Byzantine emperor banned the use of icons in churches, there was great unrest over the issue that raged for over a century. At that time the question was really over the veneration of icons but not the use of any and all art for the purpose of teaching the faith. This is how the Orthodox today defend the use of images in their churches:

"The visitor to an Orthodox church, on stepping inside, should ideally feel transported into a new world, one that affirms in the most forceful way that the beauty of God's creation is a manifestation of His glory and His love for mankind. The iconography that traditionally adorns the interior of an Orthodox church plays a major role in this affirmation. ... Icons

have also traditionally played an educative role in the Orthodox church, conveying pictorially the lessons conveyed verbally in the Gospels—art that is "a vehicle of the Gospel teaching," ... And perhaps most importantly, on a theological level, Orthodox icons—especially icons of Christ—are statements affirming the Incarnation..." [From Holy Trinity's website, HolyTrinityDallas.org.]



It may be interesting to learn a little about Greek Orthodoxy and their use of images, but what about Lutherans? Where do we land on the whole use of images in the Church?

Lutherans are not iconoclasts. We do not reject the use of any and all images like many strict Reformed Calvinist churches do. [See the example on the left of a plain unadorned Reformed church. There is no cross, or altar, or images. This reflects Calvin's strict view against "graven images." Many Protestant churches today are only decorated with plants or simple designs. Even mega churches often have video screens but no permanent art or images, as shown to the right.]



Lutherans, on the other hand, agreed with most Christians in the West that art and images are the "books of the unlearned." That is, those who cannot read, or read well, can still learn the teachings of Scripture through the use of art in things like stained glass, statues, portraits, crucifixes, and wood cuts. Of course, people who are well-educated also benefit greatly from art as the images speak to them as well. Good art has the ability to cause us to reflect and to wonder, and this can be a powerful tool in the service of the Gospel. So, Lutherans have often adorned their churches with art that is meant to teach.



Left is a picture of the inside of St. Mary's church in Wittenberg, Germany, where Martin Luther preached most of his sermons. The altar piece is by the great German artist and friend of Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach. Right is a modern facsimile of the altarpiece, with its depiction of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It hangs in the chapel at the International Center, the headquarters for the LCMS.



A close-up of the lower panel from the Cranach altar piece is a good example of art that teaches. It shows Luther in an elevated pulpit on the right, preaching from an open Bible and pointing to Christ on the cross. The idea is clear, Luther's teaching is derived from the Bible and the teaching of the Scriptures leads us to proclaim "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" (see 1st Corinthians 2:1-2).

Good Christian art is a powerful tool that can be used in churches to teach the Gospel and cause people to wonder about the wonderful things our Lord has done for us. Lately, I have been thinking we could use some more of it at Lord of Life.

In closing, let me leave you with some questions to consider on this topic: What do people see when they enter Lord of Life for the first time? Specifically, what images do they encounter? What do our images teach or convey about our beliefs? Are we using Biblical images or artwork to teach the faith? How might we do a better job of using art to inspire and transport people's minds to thoughts of what God has done for us in Christ? What Christian art (painting, statue, cross, etc.) has most moved you and caused you to think more deeply about a story in the Bible or something God has done? (Yes, movies like The Passion of the Christ and TV shows like The Chosen also count as Christian art.) You have heard it said that a picture is worth a thousand words. If you had the opportunity to convey a thousand words to someone who visits our church for the first time, what image or picture would you choose and what message would you seek to convey?

PrS



prepare for worship in september

September 7: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Deut. 30:15-20; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-35

HotD: "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord," 853

September 14: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Ezek. 34:11-24; 1 Tim. 1:(5-11)12-17; Luke 15:1-10

HotD: "Jesus Sinners Doth Receive," 609

September 21: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Amos 8:4-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-15; Luke 16:1-15

HotD: "Seek Where You May to Find a Way," 557

September 28: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Amos 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13 or 1 Tim. 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

HotD: "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart," 708



**Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art**

Puzzle!

Use the words provided to complete the puzzle.
Then write the numbered words in the correct blanks
below to complete Psalm 67:6, NIV.

WORDS:

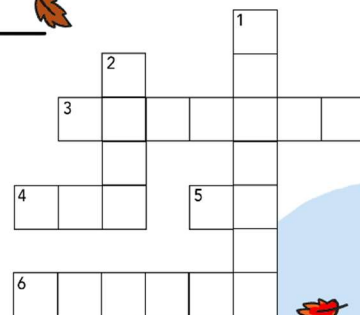
GOD, BLESSES, HARVEST,
YIELDS, US, LAND

ACROSS

3. Rhymes with farthest.
4. Rhymes with nod.
5. Rhymes with thus.
6. Rhymes with fields.

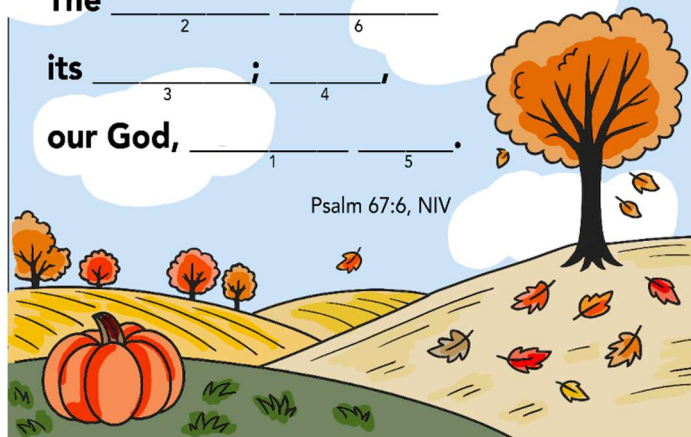
DOWN

1. Rhymes with messes.
2. Rhymes with hand.



The _____
its _____;
our God, _____

Psalm 67:6, NIV



Answer: The land yields its harvest: God, our God, blesses us. Psalm 67:6, NIV



A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

Baptism Now Saves You

On August 31, Lord of Life was blessed to celebrate Jonathan and Timothy Slater's baptism and welcome them into the family of God. Many of us, having witnessed numerous baptisms, are very familiar with how it goes: the proud parents bring their children to the font, Pastor starts with the invocation, and off we go, baptizing in the Triune Name. The process seems so familiar, but how many times have you sat back and really thought about what we are saying in the rite? What does it teach us? How does it connect to Christ's saving work? Although I can't cover all of this rite in one article, I'd like to draw your attention to one uniquely Lutheran aspect of our service of Holy Baptism: The Flood Prayer.

Martin Luther's Flood Prayer is a prayer that he wrote to replace other prayers when he revised the baptismal rite as he translated the liturgy from Latin to German. It shows how God, in His divine goodness, uses ordinary means like water to accomplish extraordinary things for His people.

The prayer begins like this:

"Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism."

In this first section of the Flood Prayer, Luther recounts the flood narrative and the Red Sea narrative found in Genesis 6-9 and Exodus 14, respectively. When it comes down to it, what happened in both of these scenarios is fairly straightforward: God used water as a means to wipe away the evil that was oppressing His people. As the people of the earth were corrupt and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, so sin corrupts us and hardens our hearts against God. On our own, we can do nothing to be rid of sin, yet God in His mercy has connected water to His Word and drowns our sin, just as He drowned evil in the flood and in the Red Sea.

The prayer continues:

"Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that You would behold name(s) according to Your boundless mercy and bless him/her/them with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in him/her/them, which has been inherited from Adam and which he himself/she herself/they themselves has/have committed since would be drowned and die."

This second section of Luther's prayer connects the imagery of the water in the Old Testament to the Living Water of the New Testament. Just as God saved His people through water in the Old Testament, He saves His people from now till eternity in the Baptism of His Son. Baptism is a violent flood of grace and mercy, drowning the Old Adam over and over for the sake of us poor sinner/saints for whom Christ died so that we would not stay dead and buried. We are alive and risen with Him. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4) For that, we give Christ all honor and glory.

Luther concludes his prayer with this:

"Grant that he/she/they be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, he/she/they would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

With these words, Luther implores that God keep His people safe and preserve His church on earth. We are separated from the unbelievers and declared worthy of eternal life, not by our own merit, but by Christ who lives in us through our Baptism. Because of this, we get to live our lives in praise and service to God and to one another. We live this service to God by doing good works for our neighbor. Even when we fail, we are cleansed. We cannot undo what God has done or unbury our sins to wear them anew. What's buried is buried; what's drowned is drowned. We are His forever. And, as Luther says, "Amen, amen means, 'yes, yes, it shall be so.'" (Small Catechism- Lord's Prayer- Conclusion)

Additional Scripture support to read in context: Acts 22:16 (Ananias baptizing Paul), Mark 16:16 (Mark's Great Commission), Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission), Ephesians 2:8-9 (Saved by Grace through Faith), Colossians 2:12 (Buried and Raised with Christ)



This signed Giclée print is making an appearance on the wall of a certain Intern's office soon!

Teen Times

At the time of writing this edition of Teen Times, Jonelle and I are spending a week in California with our family's latest blessing from God, our grandson Henry. He is one month old and the first child to our youngest son Curtis and his wife Sydney. I recall the early days of Curtis' life and that of Marcus, his older brother, while watching Henry's parents learn that newborn infants require constant attention and nurturing. He is totally dependent on Sydney and Curtis to take care of him and essentially keep him alive. A thought came to me about the discussion that Jesus had with the Nicodemus; a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. In the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel, Nicodemus says *"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him"* (verse 2). Jesus replies to him with a very difficult concept to understand. Verse 3 states that *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."* A thought crossed my mind about this verse and the reasons Jesus used these particular words, "born again." Like our grandson completely relies on his parents to survive as a newborn, so our heavenly Father desires us to be completely renewed and reliant on Him for our salvation through Christ from the very beginning of our lives.

After Nicodemus raises an eyebrow and questions what Jesus' words mean, our Lord continues with this; *"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit"* (verse 5). Jesus now introduces the elements of Christian Baptism into the discussion. As I mentioned earlier, Henry is an infant and is entirely dependent on his parents to help him grow and be healthy. We need God and His Holy Spirit to do the same for us; that is to grow and be healthy in our faith. When he is baptized, Henry will become a member of the Christian Church on earth. He will be born spiritually at his baptism, and then in the spirit he will be born through Word and Sacrament.

As tweens and teens, you are still under the care and guidance of your parents. You may not realize it now, but you will thank them for this simple fact in the near future. You need them in many ways to ensure your survival in this life just as we depend fully on our heavenly Father to provide for us, the Holy Spirit to nurture us in our faith, and Jesus as our redeemer and savior from sin.

Until next time, remember your baptism and thank your parents for all they do for you!

Scott Peters

Work and Keep

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15)

Genesis chapters one and two are familiar to us. We know them best as the Creation Account. Chapter one is where we hear the familiar, “let there be...and there was” directives. Chapter two gives us the account of Adam (the man) being formed from the “Adamah” (the dust) and becoming a living being when he receives the breath of life in his nostrils. Because of this, it would be quite easy to simply lump these two chapters into the category of creation accounts.

But do not be too hasty in this! While these two chapters do faithfully relate to us the account of creation, they also give us the creation of the “office” of steward. The man, created in the image of God in Genesis 1 and formed from the dust in Genesis 2, is created for a distinct purpose. He is created to be a steward of the perfect and beautiful creation that the Lord has made! In fact, this is THE reason that man was made. He — and we — were created in the image of God to be stewards of God’s creation.

This purpose is spelled out in verse 15 of Genesis 2. The steward has one job, with two purposes. It is fitting that in the month that our nation marks Labor Day, we consider the task of steward. The first purpose of the job of steward is to work. The steward is the caretaker of the Garden. Being a steward is work! Before the fall into sin, this was not an onerous task. But it was an active thing.

Imagine being a farmer in the Garden of Eden! Work would be only harvest. No plowing. No planting. No cultivating. No weeding. The perfect garden that the Lord had made would simply produce automatically to provide for man, woman, and all living beings!

But there is a second task in verse fifteen. The word “keep” is not just a synonym for work. This second task is related to defending. This garden, holy by virtue of its being called into existence by a holy God, needed to be defended. Here is where the vocation of steward becomes priestly. The steward was to defend the perfect and holy garden from that which was unholy. Later in the Old Testament, this was the task of the priests in the tabernacle and temple. They were to defend with their lives the Holy of Holies. This too is the labor of stewardship. It is a labor that calls the steward to be willing to put the garden before life!

Stewardship was always work. It only got burdensome after the original steward, Adam, failed to defend the garden from the alien word of the serpent. But this was not a failure of harvest. It was a failure to defend the garden! As a result, all work that followed that failure became burdensome.

The steward failed but was never fired. That is why we have such an issue with stewardship to this day. We continue to live out a pre-fall vocation in a fallen world as failed stewards. That is why we in the church need to be reminded of our vocational call to be stewards. We so easily forget that this world is not ours to do with as we please. Nothing is ours. We are but stewards entrusted with managing the creation for the glory of God and the benefit of the neighbor.

It is a daunting task. But it is the one to which we have been called. We cannot do it on our own. Apart from the grace of God shared with us through Jesus, we would be burdened to the point of temporal and eternal death. But the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel! This Gospel connects us to the fertile garden of Christ’s Work on our behalf. Now we are stewards of that grace! The Holy Spirit works this in and through us today and every day.

This is the work of the church. It is also the work of the individual steward. The Lord has placed us in the “garden” with the same twofold purpose: work and keep! Enjoy your labor. For in the Lord, our labor is never in vain



By Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life.org
LifeDate Fall 2024



Age is a blessing to youth.

As Y4Life Director, I don't usually talk or write about the aging process. It's not that I couldn't speak about the topic; youth are certainly interested in knowing how to care for others as they age, and they definitely want to know how to address life issues that accompany the aging process. In fact, the youth I work with are both empathetic and compassionate when it comes to the elderly. They value the aged. Not once have I had to convince Gen Zers that old lives are valuable lives. They know. Even better, they agree.

So why not talk to youth about the process of aging? After all, they know they're growing older. They're aging just as quickly as you and I are, aren't they?

Here's why: Because aging, at least for youth, isn't a life issue. It's a reason to rejoice!

I'm sure you know that youth don't talk about aging like the middle-aged do; instead of dreading the coming of another year, youth count birthdays with anticipation. Each year makes life brighter; each year brings them closer to driving or voting or serving or independence. Each year brings them one step closer to achieving the dreams they've been dreaming for a while. And even though there might be some anxiety about the future, I have yet to meet a youth who wants to remain 15 or 17 or 20 forever. Why? Because there's way too much ahead in life to hope for. Adulthood is the goal. With it comes freedoms and exciting possibilities!

Yet, adults, especially those of us with a few decades under our belt, know that freedoms and possibilities typically result in responsibilities, responsibilities that shape and form us, responsibilities that beget maturity. And maturity, if all goes well, brings about a seasoned and godly wisdom. Responsibility. Maturity. Wisdom. All three are desirable gifts.

If good gifts come with aging, then it's worth contemplating why most adults don't look forward to getting older—why age becomes something to hide, to worry over, to remove from Facebook. Shouldn't aging be seen as a gift rather than a curse, both privately and publicly? The answer, of course, is it should be. But it isn't. And that's because of sin.

Growing old would be easy if sin wasn't involved. Without sin, there would be no aches and pains, no hip replacements or rotator cuff surgeries. No cataracts or bunions or broken teeth. No Alzheimer's or dementia or frailty. But these ailments do exist. And all of them come with age. Instead of a walk in the park, growing old can feel more like a fall in the dark. The longer we live, the more the effects of sin compile and compound.

And sin doesn't just break down our bodies as we age, it also burdens our relationships. The list of sins we have committed against others and the record of sins others have committed against us becomes increasingly lengthy. They're too big and bulky to simply brush under the rug. They've done damage; they've left behind scars.

Unfortunately, because of sin, growing old is a crucible of sorts. It tests and refines us; it causes us to suffer. And suffering either causes us to turn inward or be turned toward God. That means aging isn't for the weak of heart. Thanks be to God that His heart is compassionate and loving. His heart is strong and true. And His heart is ours.

Christ's work assures us of God's love not just when we are young, but when we're in our latter years, too. He doesn't leave us to age alone. Isaiah reminds us that God cares for us as we age; He carries us when we are frail because He loves us:

“Even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save” (46:4).

Because of Christ, we can say with confidence that despite the wear and tear of sin, aging is actually a good gift. It is another day of life. It is one more piece of evidence that God, the best gift giver, still has gifts to give.

And our life is not just a blessing to us, it is also a blessing to others. In fact, age is a blessing to youth. Youth not only need opportunities to grow in responsibility, maturity, and wisdom, but they also need role models who display these gifts. They need mentors of the faith. Youth need YOU.

Christian adults who pour into youth the life-affirming truths of Christ's love and faithfulness are gifts from God. They remind young people, especially during times of hardship and weariness, that this, too, shall pass. God is indeed faithful. And youth, often immersed in a secular world without hope, need to be told stories of suffering and triumph, stories of God's faithfulness even in difficult times, again and again. Youth need to be reminded of the faithful people who have gone before them, the lineage of faith they come from, and the cloud of witnesses that not only surrounds them but is also, right now, cheering them on (Hebrews 11).

So, for those readers who are beginning to gray or who have already earned a crown of white, remember that aging is a gift. It is another great thing that God has done. And this great thing—LIFE itself—enables us to boldly proclaim the mightiness of God to the next generation alongside the Psalmist:

“O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come. Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?” (Psalm 71:17-19).

In God's Church, we have a beautiful picture of God's provision for His people through His people: God works through seasoned adults to bring youth the gifts of faithfulness, constancy, and godly wisdom. Just as importantly, He works through youth to bring adults the gifts of joy and enthusiasm for the gift of LIFE. **No matter how many years have passed, may we all rejoice in the gift of another day, another week, another year to live in His mercy, hope, love, and life.**

Happy aging, friends!

BE THE LIGHT — IN THE — LORD

LWML Dal-North ZONE Fall Workshop

October 4, 2025

9:00am Registration

9:30am Opening

9:50am Program:

Angela Poen

11:00am Business Meeting

Lunch Following

(\$12 Cost-sharing)

Ingathering:
Community Garden
Kitchen

Our Savior Lutheran Church
2708 Virginia Parkway
McKinney, TX 75071

www.oslmckinney.org

RSVP

Leaders scan the QR code
to register your group by
Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2025



"for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)" Ephesians 5:8-9 (ESV)



SEPTEMBER

birthdays & anniversaries

- 2 Bill Bennett
- 2 Max Cleavenger
- 2 Candace Klein
- 2 Fred & Ruth Bernhardt (58)
- 3 Gail Senter
- 6 Dave & Dee Peters (61)
- 7 Robert & Heather Padgett (22)
- 9 Mary Farmer
- 9 Mike & Monique Phelan (15)
- 12 Carrie Ziegelbein
- 13 Charlotte Reeves
- 16 Sarah Kim
- 16 Andrew Short
- 21 Angie Buckmeier
- 21 Mike Scaglione
- 22 Mike Kunschke
- 22 Gary Nuschler, Jr.
- 23 Nora Parrent
- 26 Mirien Senter
- 27 Jerry Parish
- 28 James Kade
- 29 Carl Carper
- 30 Beverly 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 one 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., September 13 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 or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, September 21 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

What was the name of the wealthy merchant of purple cloth who met Paul and his companions, was baptized and became a leader in the Philippian church?

- A. Priscilla
- B. Lydia
- C. Dorcas
- D. Joanna



Answer: B (See Acts 16:11-15, 40.)

