

St. John and Trinity Lutheran Parish Newsletter

St. John and Trinity Lutheran Parish,
204 2nd Street NW, [P.O. Box 99]
Hillsboro, ND 58045
Trinitystjohn.com | facebook.com/stjohnhillsboro

Worship Times: 8:30 @ Trinity
10:30 @ St. John
Sunday School: 9:15 @ St. John
9:30 @ Trinity

Rev. Jacob Swenson, Pastor | 651-331-1014 | trinitystjohn@outlook.com
Faith Swenson, Deaconess | 218-329-8515 | deaconess.swenson@gmail.com



St. John Lutheran Church,

204 2nd St NW

Hillsboro, ND 58045

Ruth Johnson, Secretary | secretarystj@rrv.net

701-636-4692

Trinitystjohn.com

Trinity Lutheran Church,

270 7th St NE

Hope, ND 58046

Our Mission Statement:

Growing Faith by Sharing God's Word

By Sharing God's Word, we:

- Show God's love in our words and actions,
- Help others as Christ helps us,
- Accept responsibility in taking the Gospel into the world,
- Reach out to people in need,
- Inspire and teach our youth the truth of God's Word,
- Nurture a personal relationship with Christ through God's Word and worship, and,
- Give people the hope of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Lutheranism in the Media

- The Lutheran Hour is broadcast on Sundays at 7:30 a.m. on KFGO and 8:30 a.m. on the Halstad Telephone Company local access channel.
- Listen to Lutheran music and programming for free at any time at lutheranpublicradio.org.
- For excellent, Lutheran Youtube videos look up "Worldview Everlasting," or go to worldvieweverlasting.com

Greetings in Christ Jesus,

By the time you are reading this article, the block party and fundraiser at St. John has come and gone. A large, heartfelt thank you is due to all those who volunteered, brought items, *bought* items, and participated in any other way. A special thank you as well goes to Deaconess Faith who really poured a lot of time and heart into. We're really excited to get the playground off (on?) the ground and we couldn't have done it with all of you, both in Hillsboro and elsewhere. Thank you.

Also by now, the school year has come back into swing. I hope and trust that you all had a wonderful summer. Coming up this month (September) are a number of things to remember. The first thing, calendar-wise, is confirmation. Confirmation will begin September 7th at 6pm. Confirmation is a time of formal training for communicant membership at our congregations. The practice stems from St. Paul's instruction that all who are to receive the body and blood of Christ first be instructed (1 Cor. 11). The ordinary age for confirmation class in our congregations is 7-8th grade. Both children who are members of our churches as well as those who are interested are invited to attend. Confirmation for adults is also available, which is done at a quickened pace.

The second thing to keep in mind is that Sunday School starts September 11th. This will also be our rally Sunday. Sunday School starts at 9:15 and will finish up in time for the children to grab a snack before service. Sunday School is available for children in Preschool through Confirmation, members and non-members alike. One of the things that we'll be trying to emphasize a little more this year will be memory work. It is very important for us, both children and adults, to have our Catechism and as much of the Bible memorized as we can. We've begun putting weekly devotionals in our bulletins, and you'll find on the front a verse to memorize and a chunk of the Small Catechism. These inserts are very useful for parents to train their children to be good and faithful Christians. The last thing to remember is Sunday the 25th, which will be our mission festival. Look for more information to come in the bulletins. One last note - We have a new and exciting opportunity for those who are unable to be with us on Sunday mornings. Beginning in September, we will be having evening services on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. There are many reasons why Sunday morning can be hard, but no reason why we can't work together to find a way so that everyone is able to hear God's Word and receive His good gifts. Services will begin at roughly 7 o'clock, or right after confirmation ends. Wednesday night was chosen because it seemed to be the night least affected by other activities, but if we find that another works significantly better, it remains a possibility. The Lord's Supper will be offered at each evening service for those unable to be present on Sundays. This month the Wednesday services will be the 7th and the 21st. We hope to see you there.

Last month was our second month walking through the Augsburg Confession. We covered some important articles (Original Sin and the Son of God) - and the big one - Article IV on Justification. Since it is perhaps the most important article in the AC and our articles today hinge on it, we'll include it below as a reference point. In short, we believe that one cannot be justified before God on account of his or her own strength, merit, or works. We are justified freely for Christ's sake through faith. By His death on the cross, Jesus made full satisfaction for our sins. We are counted as righteous in God's eyes only through faith in Jesus.

Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into

favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4 [3:21–26; 4:5]).¹

When we talk about the Reformation we generally mean the Lutheran Reformation, since we're Lutherans. Sometimes we forget that the Lutherans weren't the only ones moving around during that period. There were at least a handful of different movements going on and an important question was brought up: If we are saved by grace through faith alone, *how* do we get this faith? This question set the Lutherans apart not just from the Roman Catholic Church, but all the Protestants as well. The Lutheran answer to the question: we receive faith in Christ through the external, spoken Word and through the Sacraments. Together these are called the Means of Grace. In order that the Word may be preached and the Sacraments administered, Jesus instituted the pastoral office. That brings us to Augsburg Confession, article V.

So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ's sake.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.²

The title of the article is "The Ministry," but it's about much more than that. You can see from the first words, "So that we may obtain this faith," that it's connected to Article IV (justification), and everything is at stake in that article. We have just confessed in Article IV that we are not saved by anything we do or are, but totally by the work of Christ. We are declared righteous by His grace through faith. In order to keep that train going, faith itself must also not be our work. It must be given. But how?

The thrust of the article is initially against those who claimed that the Holy Spirit worked outside of any means at all. They taught that the Holy Spirit necessarily creates faith *without* preaching and the Sacraments - for requiring those things would be limiting the work of God. Luther responded to them by wondering aloud if Christ becoming flesh was limiting the work of God and that, if God knew preaching was unnecessary, why He bothered with the prophets. "The Enthusiasts" as the Reformer called them, believed that instead of preaching and the Sacraments, fasting and self-discipline would invoke the Holy Spirit.

That brings error on the other side, when it was also taught by some that the Holy Spirit was bound completely to the Word and Sacraments. That is, that if the words are spoken and the actions performed by the right person, the Holy Spirit will absolutely create faith and give the forgiveness of sins. That logic, carried to its end in the Middle Ages, led to the decline of preaching and the abundance of Sacraments that were "performed" in private, or intended to benefit by simply doing the actions, without faith. Contrary to that, the article states, "Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given. He works faith, when and where it pleases God" - not just by doing the actions.

We went through the weeds a little there, but we'll bring it back. Article V is titled, "The Ministry." The main question is, *how* is faith given? It doesn't come out of nowhere, and it doesn't come through our own actions, but it is given through God's Word and the Sacraments. Through these things the Holy

¹ Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 33.

² *Ibid.*

Spirit is given, who creates faith in us not because of our own merits, but for Christ's sake. It is for this that the preaching office was established. The pastoral office was established by Christ to preach and teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, through which the Holy Spirit works to create and sustain faith.

So, salvation is completely separate from works. We are saved totally by God's grace through faith in Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. Faith itself isn't our work, but it is created in us by the Holy Spirit through preaching and the Sacraments. Where, then, do works fit in? Some charged the Lutherans with excluding works entirely, which is not true. We just do not include them as part of justification. However, those who have been justified will do good works. Article VI is titled, "New Obedience".

Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruit [Galatians 5:22–23]. It is necessary to do good works commanded by God [Ephesians 2:10], because of God's will. We should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. The forgiveness of sins and justification is received through faith. The voice of Christ testifies, "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty' " (Luke 17:10). The Fathers teach the same thing. Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely forgiveness of sins, without works, through faith alone."³

We cut good works out entirely from salvation. We cannot earn our way to heaven. No matter how creatively one tries to say it, we cannot make things right between us and God. Only Christ can do that, and has in fact *done that*, by His death on the cross. Those who have been brought to faith by the Holy Spirit will do good works. In that sense, it is acceptable to say "it is necessary to do good works." A living faith will produce good works. That is where James 2 comes in. (2:17, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.") A living faith brings forth good fruits not to benefit itself, nor earn favor before God, but for the sake of others. To put icing on the cake, none of what the Augsburg Confession says about this matter is new. We simply confess what the church catholic has always confessed. As proof, see the citation from Ambrose. Ambrose lived from c. 340 to 397 A.D.

Next month we'll pick up with articles VII and VIII. We'll talk about the Church: what the Church is, where Church unity comes from and consists of, and other cool stuff. In the meantime, you can now find our sermons and other fun things in podcast form. Meaning: they will download to your phone automatically, once you set it up. On iPhones, go to the iTunes store and search "Trinity and St. John" and click to subscribe. On Android phones, go to Google Play Music and search for the same thing. On YouTube, search for "Trinity and St. John Lutheran Churches".

The peace of Christ be with you all,

Pastor Jacob Swenson

³., 33-34.

Announcements

LWML NEWS - We received word that the Mercy Meals for Orphan Grain Train that were packed at our Zone LWML Spring Event have arrived in Liberia and will be given to children at 2 schools in rural Liberia.

The LWML has adopted a first year deaconess student at Ft. Wayne Seminary. Her name is Kaitlin Jandereski from Michigan. A letter from her, to introduce herself to us has been posted on the bulletin board in the church narthex. We will remember her in our prayers and support her financially during the coming school year.

Thank you to everybody who helped or donated to the Block Party Playground Fundraiser on August 21. We raised \$2,265 which brings us to a total of \$4682. Keep spreading the word about the playground and encourage people to support the church's effort to build a playground in this part of town!

Confirmation will begin this week. Starting September 7, we'll be meeting at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary to study God's Word together.

Midweek Worship services: This week we'll also begin trying something new. Starting this Wednesday a midweek Worship service will be available for those unable to attend on Sundays. We'll start by meeting the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 7 p.m. The Lord's Supper will be available at each service.

Sunday School starts on Sunday, September 11. It begins at 9:15 a.m. There will be a potluck dinner at noon followed by games and social times.

				1 Jodie Soland	2 Stephanie Burrell	3
4 **Jim & Ruth Johnson John Meyer	5 Lee Mooney	6	7	8	9 Betty Riemer	10 Tyler Hanson Ruth Rust
11 ** Elliot & Lisa Rotvold Bradley Johnson	12	13	14 Caleb Sand	15 Wayne DickHoff *Dan & Bambi Manthey	16 Brittany Mooney Robert Wilson	17 Tatiana Egan
18 **Jesse & Rachel Dovenmuehler	19 Betty Manthey	20	21 Ashley Henn	22 Wallace Hertwig	23 Curtis & Stacey Riemer	24 Ross Lougheed Avery Rotvold
25 **Tracy Aasen & Melissa Kozojed	26 Shelley Garcia Raymond Schlichtmann	27 Tayson Ambuehl	28 Warren Grothmann	29 Chase Haffely	30	**Greeters *Anniversaries

				1 7 ^{a.m} Men's Bible Breakfast 6 ^{pm} LWML at Hope	2	3
4 8:30 ^{am} Worship at Hope 10:30 ^{am} Worship at SJ	5	6	7 7 ^{a.m.} Elders meeting 2 ^{pm} Nursing Home Devos 6 ^{pm} Confirmation class 7 ^{pm} LWML Exec. Bd. 7:30 ^{pm} Mission Festival planning meeting 7 ^{pm} Midweek church services at St. John	8 7 ^{a.m} Men's Bible Breakfast 10 ^{am} Kelleher Bible study	9	10 9:15 ^{a.m.} Coffee 9:30 ^{a.m.} LWML
11 COMMUNION 8:30 ^{am} Worship at Hope 9:15 ^{am} SS at SJ 9:30 ^{am} SS at Hope 10:30 ^{am} Worship at SJ	12	13	14 7 ^{am} Council meeting 2 ^{pm} Nursing Home Devos 6 ^{pm} Confirmation class 7 ^{pm} Quarterly Voters meeting	15 7 ^{a.m} Men's Bible Breakfast 10 ^{am} Kelleher Bible study	16	17
18 8:30 ^{am} Worship at Hope 9:15 ^{am} SS at SJ 9:30 ^{am} SS at Hope 10:30 ^{am} Worship at SJ	19	20	21 2 ^{pm} Nursing Home Devos 6 ^{pm} Confirmation class 7 ^{pm} Midweek church services at St. John	22 7 ^{a.m} Men's Bible Breakfast 10 ^{am} Kelleher Bible study	23	24
25 8:30 ^{am} Worship at Hope 9:15 ^{am} SS at SJ 9:30 ^{am} SS at Hope 10:30 ^{am} Worship at SJ	26 11 ^{am} -6 ^{pm} Blood Drive at St. John	27 7 ^{pm} Finance meeting	28 2 ^{pm} Nursing Home Devos 6 ^{pm} Confirmation class	29 7 ^{a.m} Men's Bible Breakfast 10 ^{am} Kelleher Bible study	30	

Parish of St. John and
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Church Staff

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