



LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS

+ Pentecost 2022 +

About the Cover:

Christ Pantocrator

St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai

500's A.D.

This icon is one over the very few to survive the Iconoclasm during the 9th century, a period in which all icons and images in the Church were destroyed based on the belief that the reason why Christendom was losing so much land to the Islamic invasions was because they had violated the commandment of God to 'make no graven images.' Kept safe in the deserts of the Sinai Peninsula, it escaped destruction, and lives on to this day.

The image shows Jesus, holding the Gospel of John in His arms, and making the sign of the cross. If one looks closely, half His face seems haggard and gaunt, the other perfect. This was to signify the two natures of Christ, human and divine.

After the Iconoclasm of the 9th century, the Church determined that such images were acceptable, since God became visible for us in Christ. If God became visible, it was no longer wrong to depict Him as visible, and so it was the pride of the Church to make images of Christ *as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* ■

Life in Christ

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4423 I-55 North
Jackson, MS 39206

(601) 366-2055

www.ChristLutheranJacksonMS.org

Rev. George Fields
Sr. Sara Fields



Table of Contents

- 4 Piety in the Pestilence
- 6 Ladies' Night Out
- 7 You're Invited to a Baby Shower!
- 8 Hymn of the Month
- 12 Meet Our New Members:
Bob & Sheila Pfaff
- 14 Farewell & Godspeed
- 16 Other Nonsensical Words... Swearing
When You Can't
- 18 Blood for Greg
- 20 Rudsenske Baby Shower
- 22 Endless Song of Praise—The Liturgy:
The Prayer of Thanksgiving
- 24 Meet the Secretary... Taunya Smith
- 25 Present Even in Unusual Circumstances
- 26 Hard Theology: Creator of Heaven
& Earth
- 28 VBS: A Journey to Jerusalem
- 32 I Am a Christian
- 35 St. Anslem's Mediation upon
the Holy Cross
- 36 This Month at Christ Lutheran

During the pandemic, this church put out on our blog a short series of meditations for all of us under lockdown. It was simply called Piety in the Pestilence. And it was written to encourage the people of God during that hard time.

As the 'pestilence,' that is, Covid, seemed to let up, as well as the lockdowns, and life began to return to normal in glorious Mississippi, the little series of blog posts ended. But it should not have, for we Christians are always under a pestilence, a plague, an attack.

We are told to turn away from those who say 'peace, peace, but there is no peace.' And for a good reason. There is never peace. The devil never rests. He is always drawing a new battle line against the Church and against its people.

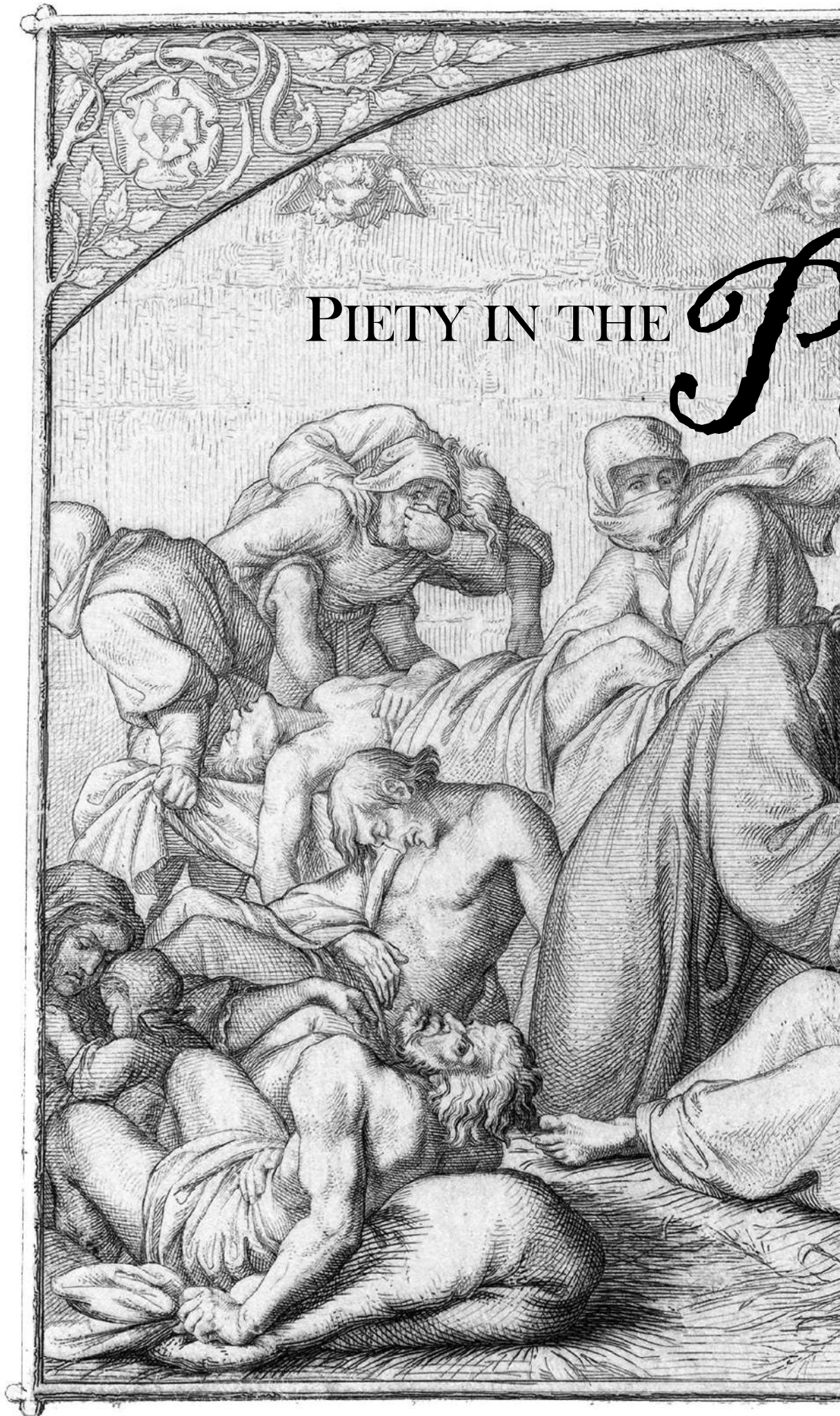
Sometimes it may be political. Many of us focus on that. We worry about this or that case before the Supreme Court.

Sometimes it may be social, what we are used to calling the 'culture wars.' And surely the devil uses this to turn man against man and neighbor against neighbor. To make all honest communication impossible, and make vocal hatred seem our only stand.

Sometimes it is personal, for we, when left in the darkness of our mind, draw up old animosities and whip up new annoyances, that we may find new reason to resent our friends, family, and neighbor.

There is no peace.

PIETY IN THE





Pestilence

Pastor Fields

There is no peace because the devil will not rest. He will always work to create in our flesh the most craven, the most wicked, the most cowardly, the most dishonest, the most divisive, the most resentful sentiments. Which is to say, that he will always work to divide us.

As many of you know, I love etymologies, that is, the origin or original meaning of words. The word 'devil' comes from the Greek word 'diavolos' which means simply 'one who throws apart.' That is, one who divides. The Christ seeks to unite the hearts of all; the devil seeks to shatter them apart.

The book of Revelation writes concerning Satan: 'Who is like unto the beast, and who can make war against him?'

Many succumb to this belief that sin and the unbelieving world are an invincible force against the faith, that we who believe are relics of the past.

And yet the war rages on, in the heart of every person, and in the soul of every believer.

What is piety in the pestilence? What is patience during the plague? I tell you of one who shall overcome the beast, Him who lives in every baptized Christian and makes war in the mind of every baptized spirit. It is Him, who rose again from the dead on the third day, and He will never forsake us, for He shall make all the nations his footstool.

Every evil thing is for but a time, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. ■

Ladies Night Out



Shrimp and grits and oysters—oh, my! Our Lutheran ladies visited Drago's Seafood Restaurant in July, and the food was as tasty as the fellowship was edifying!

If you would like to “host” Ladies’ Night Out (i.e., pick a restaurant and book a reservation), sign up in the Fellowship Hall! All [ladies] are welcome to join us! ■



Oh Boy!

Join us for a baby shower honoring
CHRISTINA GALLARNO

SATURDAY

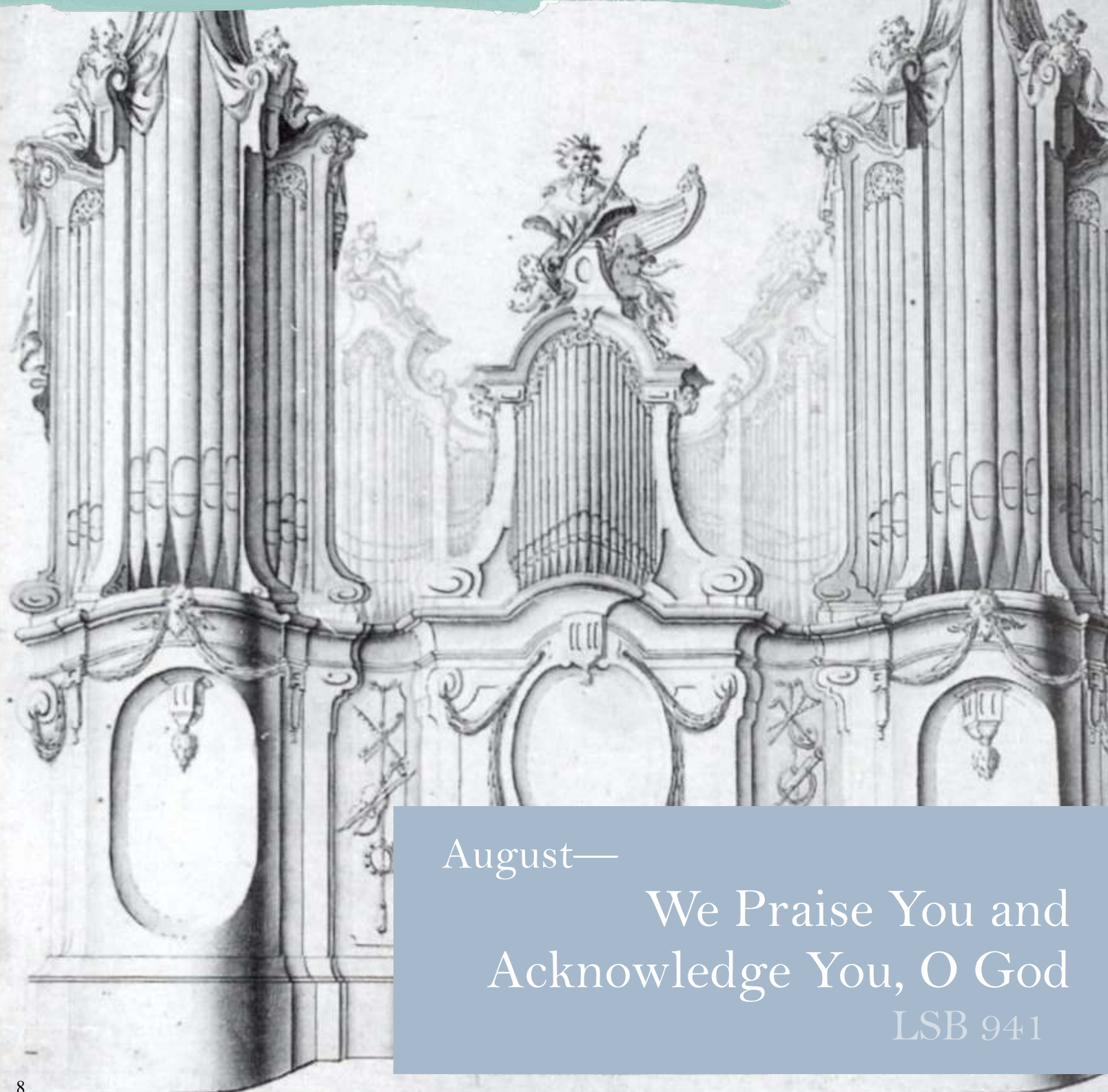
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Hymn of the Month

Sister Sara



August—

We Praise You and
Acknowledge You, O God

LSB 941

The Church's hymnody, built up and beautified over millennia, is replete with profound poetry and moving melodies. But this month's hymn is perhaps especially so, as it marries the text of the ancient *Te Deum* with the inspired music of Holst's "Jupiter." Yes, this month's hymn is the much beloved "We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God."

The lyrics of our infamous "941" go back almost as far as the Early Church herself, as they are hymn-ified form of the text of the *Te Deum* (literally, "You, O God"; the Latin title of the canticle we sing in Matins on page 223). The *Te Deum* can be traced at least to the 500s A.D., probably having been developed over time in the liturgy, though it is often attributed by ecclesial legend to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. Whether this apocryphal authorship is accurate or not, the content is definitely far older, for it is simply a combination of the creed with the *Sanctus* ("Holy, Holy, Holy..."). It is divided into three sections, each associated with a Person of the Trinity: if you turn to Matins, you can see the first page is heavily associated with the Father, the second with the Son, and the third with the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The *Sanctus* is embedded in that first section, as the eternal song of all the host of heaven, a song which we join in singing even here below. Especially by the Middle Ages, the *Te Deum* was such an integral part of the liturgy that Martin Luther called it the "Third Symbol" (*symbol* here meaning a representation of the Faith), the first two being the Apostles' and Athanasian creeds.

Stephen Starke's lyrics in our hymn are impressively close to the text of the canticle, keeping both the creed and *Sanctus* intact. Stanza three gives particular emphasis to the redemptive work of Christ, tracing His life from the virgin birth through His resurrection, making this a hymn appropriate for any time of the Church Year.

Interestingly, "We Praise You and Acknowledge You" was not Starke's first attempt at setting the *Te Deum*. In the 1990's, he wrote a version which he entitled "Alleluia! God Eternal," and set it to the tune of "Thy Strong Word." (Secretly, I wish we had that version somewhere...). However, he was later introduced to the English patriotic hymn, "I Vow to Thee, My Country" (a fantastic hymn, by the way), which is sung to

the tune of Gustav Holst's "Jupiter," from *The Planets*. Musing that this, "being such a strong tune, could carry the weight of a strong text, like the *Te Deum*," he rewrote his versification especially for this tune, and hence was born our beloved hymn.

It is worth noting that, if you have ever listened to the entire movement of Holst's "Jupiter," you might recall that the tune we know and love is only a *part* of the song. Holst's orchestral suite channels the namesake of the respective planets, drawing forth the character of each of the pagan gods. Jupiter, the greatest of the gods, is also called the "Bringer of Jollity." Much of the movement dedicated to him is driven by exhilarating strings and almost frenetic rhythms, giving the listener an irresistible sense of jollity, appropriately enough. However, although Jupiter brings that festal happiness, he is also king of the gods, and so his regal presence demands reverence. Accordingly, the musical merry-making comes to an abrupt hush almost halfway through the piece, as trumpets declare that the king has arrived. With that, the majestic tune we all know begins, and one can imagine the king of the gods gracing the royal hall, filling the hallowed throne room with his presence.

This music paints a portrait of the mythical gods, but we worship the One True God. Though what Holst depicts is based on fiction, the sentiment is real: there is a God, the King of all the host of heaven. He is the "joy of man's desiring," bringing jollity, as it were, far beyond the imagination of the pagan gods. And because He is the grave and revered King, we hail Him with all the laud and grandeur our hearts can offer.

The next time you sing this hymn will likely be in the Divine Service. Though you enter a temporal building, with mundane carpet beneath your feet and groaning arches overhead, there you need not imagine the throne room of God. For there, upon the Altar, heaven envelops earth into the eternal liturgy; there, in the Divine Service, *you are in the divine throne room*. The King of All has come to dwell among us, and heralding His presence, we burst forth in songs of praise, shouting, "We praise You and acknowledge You, O God to be the Lord..." ■

Hymn of the Month

September—

Christ, the Lord of Hosts,
Unshaken

LSB 521

The month of September revives us from the long spell of summer with—finally!—the return of feast days! Two such holidays greet us here: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14), and the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (Sept. 29). If you are a lover of Victorian literature, you have probably heard the latter referred to as “Michaelmas” (i.e., the *Mass* for the Feast of St. *Michael*...). It is this holiday, Michaelmas, that our September Hymn of the Month explicates with militant melody and invigorating rhythm.

Although most of our hymns date from time immemorial, this particular hymn comes from our own modern day! A pastor named Peter Prange was preparing music for Michaelmas in Jacksonville, Florida, when he realized there weren’t many good hymns for that festival in our English Lutheran hymnody. He took it upon himself to write one, and “Christ, the Lord of Hosts, Unshaken,” was born.

As with all feasts, the center of the story is Christ Himself, who overcame death and grave and brought us into life everlasting. Appropriately, this hymn recognizes that and therefore begins with Christ in the very first word. Its deeply dramatic language depicts the battle between Christ and the satanic horde, setting the scene of the battle in the first stanza. Personally, I love the imagery of Christ “slamming them [sin and death] in their steely cage.”

Stanza two sees St. Michael leading the hosts of heaven in dreadful battle against the ancient serpent, the dragon of St. John’s Revelation. Behind the lyrics “Cast him [Satan] earth-bound with his angels,” echoes the haunting words of Christ in Luke 10, in which He speaks of seeing Satan fall from heaven as lightning.

Stanza three draws our memory back to Eden, to the first Fall of our father Adam. However, the hymn reveals Satan as the Great Deceiver, the father of lies. To him, God declares, “You’ll lie crushed beneath His feet!”

And so the foretold Savior charges forth in stanza four, trampling Satan beneath His feet. Perhaps the most important part of this climax though, is the first phrase of the stanza: “Jesus came, this word fulfilling.” Of course, this is a reference to the serpent’s curse in Genesis 3, referenced in the previous stanza. But Christ is not simply the fulfillment of a prophetic word; rather, He Himself *is* the Word. He is all in all. He fulfills all that was ever meant to be. He comes as the triumphant Word, defeating the devil and all his hosts, but He comes as a lowly Word... one who “bore the brunt of our temptation.” He even died upon the “wretched tree”—the most despicable of humiliations. But this He did, as the Word of Life, to fulfill the word spoken so long ago, that He might bring many sons to glory.

Luke 10 comes back once more as a final judgment upon Satan, as we see in stanza five that “the tyrant” falls “swift as lightning.” When does this happen? At the... word! The Word of Jesus. News of Jesus’ victory, in deafening finality, “floods the earth and fills the sky.” This news radiates from the graves to the end of all eternity, and no one, not even the wily serpent, can escape its scope. Boom.

And so we end, in stanza six, hearing about the present work of the angelic legions. After all, this is a hymn about St. Michael and all angels. God has given to *them* to protect and guard His own Image, mankind, against the demonic foe. We sing the last words of scripture, “Come, Lord Jesus,” invoking the final destruction of the dragon of St. John’s Revelation, with Christ, St. Michael, and all the heavenly host making war upon the Prince of Darkness. And we know who wins that fight. For we know that ours is the victory in Christ. Amen. ■

Fun Fact:

“Christ, the Lord of Hosts Unshaken” was originally set to the tune SEIH, HIER BIN ICH. For most of us who don’t know German, or melody nomenclature, that would be the tune of LSB 353, “Jesus Came, the Heavns Adoring.” It definitely gives the hymn a different feel!

Fun Fact:

The hymn tune we use now is the same as the hymn 454, “Sing, My Tongue, Glorious Battle.” This muscular tune recalls us to Good Friday, when we sing 454. The association helps us to frame the battle of St. Michael within the salvific work of Christ Himself, the triumphant King.

Revelation 12:7-17

⁷And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

¹²Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

¹³And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

¹⁴And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

¹⁵And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

¹⁶And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

¹⁷And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Meet Our New Members!

Bob & Sheila Pfaff



Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133).

And indeed, the Lord has blessed the communion of Christ Lutheran with a new brother and sister!

Bob and Sheila Pfaff (pronounced "Fahff") have come to us from Christ Our Savior Lutheran in Lenox,



Tennessee. Although Christ Lutheran is, naturally, Dixie's finest place to retire to, the Pfaffs happened upon our congregation through a family connection—their daughter, Leslie Dickens!

As you know by now from Bob's help during Pastor Fields's vacation, he is a retired LCMS pastor—and boy, are we grateful for that (though we'll try not to work him too hard)! He graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and served for twenty-two years at St. Paul in

Wartburg, Tennessee. Now, he enjoys sport shooting, boating, and traveling in his spare time.

Sheila has done everything from teaching, to homemaking, to business management. Needless to say, she is a well-rounded woman. Nowadays, she relaxes by reading, doing needle work, gardening, and traveling.

We are so grateful that the Lord has blessed our family with Bob and Sheila, and we pray that He continues to bless our lives together! ■



With joy we greeted Joshua and Sarah McKeown into our family only a year ago. We have rejoiced with them in their confirmation in the Lutheran confessions and celebrated as they were joined in marriage. And now, though with sadness at their departure, we wish them abundant blessings as they move to the Northeast for continued studies. On August 7, we bade them farewell and Godspeed during the Divine Service, praying for the Lord's protection and guidance along their way. And, in good Lutheran fashion, we followed it with...



Farewell & Godspeed



a potluck, of course! Many thanks to Sabrina Goodlett for coordinating the festivities and to all who contributed. We will certainly miss this brother and sister, and they shall not cease to be in our prayers as they start this new chapter! ■



Other nonsensical words... Swearing when you can't.

Pastor Fields

The English language has a long history of inventing strange terms to swear with when you are not supposed to.

But to understand why, we have to know why we call saying bad words 'swearing' or 'cursing' or 'cussing' to begin with. To swear is take the name of God in your favor, as we do under oath at a trial. To curse is to take God's name against someone else's favor. Both are not acceptable biblically, for we are to *'let our yes be yes and our no be no.'* And to *'not take the Lord's name in vain.'*

However, we are just sinful enough to want to both swear and curse, and quite sinful enough to find ways to do it in such a way that we think make it acceptable to the Divine Majesty of God.

Here are a few examples, both old and new, to illustrate the point:

Gadzooks!

This started originally as 'by God's hooks.' Since the subject isn't God directly, but His 'hooks', it was considered okay.

What in
tarnation!

We've all heard this from a Yosemite Sam Looney Toon, but what is a *tarnation*? Well, it is an old Americanism that is a slurring of the terms 'eternal damnation.'

Gosh darn it!

I think you could guess...

Holy cow!
Holy mackerel!
Holy smokes!

Holy Cow is a reference to the Golden Calf, and it was used as a way of saying that you were stunned in a negative way, just as Moses was when he saw the Golden Calf. However, over time, it became common to 'cow' with whatever other animal or thing people were familiar with.



Gee whiz!

This, which is often said in exasperation, is a way of saying 'God is wise.'

For crying out loud!

This started as something For Christ's.... something. But in the same way that people today say 'shut the front door' to refer to something different, *For crying out loud*, started as something that resembled the original blasphemous phrases, but changed it enough to be 'socially acceptable.'

Bloody!

And finally, to add something from the Old Country, '*bloody*' in the many ways that the English (and maybe some Canadians) use it, was a reference to the blood of Christ on the altar. I learned this the hard way in High School from a very devout teacher of English origin. We kids thought were clever by saying *bloody* as a way to get around the schools very strict rules about cursing, but our teacher would have a yard stick ready to discipline us for using it if she heard it, because she knew the real meaning, and she was not going to have the Blood of Christ taken lightly by anyone, the least of which a bunch of smarmy, stupid High School kids like myself. My wrists hurt to this day.

What is the purpose of this article? Part of it is just for me to have fun with etymologies, which you all know I enjoy. But the more important part is to show that somehow, when anything of importance happens, whether we are amused, surprised, astonished, dismayed, saddened or anything else, we feel a need to invoke the name of God. Even though America's Puritan background has forced our language to look for other ways to say God's name 'without saying it', yet we still say these things. What is the moral of the story? Perhaps in all these moments of importance, but joyful and sad, we should just pray.

There is no need to be creative to avoid social faux pas. The Psalms give us all the words we need. ■

blood for Greg



As you have probably heard, our sign-language interpreter Greg Goldman was diagnosed earlier this year with acute leukemia. He has spent most the summer receiving treatments and getting blood transfusions, and by God's grace he is persevering through it all. Christ Lutheran was blessed with an opportunity to support him by holding a blood drive. On July 18th, Mississippi Blood Services came with a giant bus and took donations in our parking lot (well, almost... comically, their bus was too big to make the incline, so they parked on the road). Thank you to all who came to give blood, and thanks to all who continue to pray for Greg. He is still in need of blood, so if you would like to donate, you can visit Mississippi Blood Services and use his code (EF96). Our Savior poured out his blood for the life of the world, and now, in some small way, we too can pour out our blood for the life of a friend. ■



Rudsenske
BABY
SHOWER





What a fun evening we had as we celebrated in anticipation of new life at Christ Lutheran! On Saturday, July 9th, the Goodletts hosted a couples baby shower for Ben and Natalie's little bundle, expected to arrive on Labor Day (appropriately enough!). Food and drinks and presents overflowed, and it appears the new baby will be well supplied with all manner of clothes, diapers, and little toys. May God bless this baby, and may He guide and support Ben and Natalie as they embark on the wonderful adventure of parenting!

Heavenly Father, receive our heartfelt thanks for this child, a gift of Your grace and love for us in Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your holy angels to shield him from all dangers of body and soul. Preserve him according to Your good pleasure until that day when he is brought to the waters of Holy Baptism to receive the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. ■



endless song of praise— THE LITURGY

Sister Sara

The Eucharistic Prayer

OR

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Following the Sanctus is the eucharistic prayer that balances the sermon as a recitation of God's mighty acts of salvation that culminated on the night in which He was betrayed. Like the sermon, the eucharistic prayer interprets for the baptized how God is a God who saves.

—Dr. Arthur Just, Jr., *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service*

“God is a God who saves.” This is the *center* of the Christian religion, and the Eucharist is the manifestation of that salvific reality. Through God's own Body and Blood, we are saved.

That said, when we partake of the Eucharist, of that Body and Blood, we are participating in the “climax of the story,” if you will: the part in a many-paged book when all the pieces finally come together. But there was so much plot before this page, so much build-up to get us to this point. God is a God who saves, but not just in this moment; He is a God who has saved throughout time and history, and all of it has culminated here.

Enter: the Eucharistic Prayer. As a prayer, it comes before the Godhead in reverent thankfulness (remember, *eucharist* means “the thanksgiving”) for the salvation that He has accomplished for us and which we are about to receive upon our lips. But more, it recounts the mighty works of God on our behalf throughout all history. It shows to us who pray it how God has *always* been a God who saves. Many of the eucharistic prayers of old told this story beginning with the Old Testament and stretching forward to our present reality: from God’s ancient promise to Eve, to the Flood of Noah; from the promises to Abraham and his offspring, to the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt; from the many wanderings of God’s people, to their final rest in the One who came in the flesh and was crucified for all. The story of the world is laid forth, illumined by the light of the final salvation which awaits us upon the altar.

What the Creed is to Baptism (i.e., a summary of the Faith), the Eucharistic Prayer is to the Lord’s Supper. It interprets the tumult of history through the cross of Christ and summarizes the story of our salvation, all in the context of the saving supper before us.

Interestingly, the Eucharistic prayers of the Early Church and even through most of the Church’s history had, embedded within them, the Words of Institution: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread...” The Words of Institution? In a prayer? But that shouldn’t be surprising to us, for in fact, the whole liturgy is exactly that: an extended, enveloping prayer. And as we have learned from our “collect form” of prayer, we address our heavenly Father by first recognizing His action, and *then*, on that basis, responding with our petitions. This embodies the reality of our state, that nothing is possible without God. And by including these words of Christ in the Eucharistic prayers, the Church recognizes God’s salvific act for us, and only in response, do we come to feast upon that salvation.■

Selected Prayers of Thanksgiving in the LSB:

Christmas —

In the beginning You created all things by Your Word; and in the fullness of time Your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Let Your Word made flesh dwell richly among us that, faithfully eating His body and drinking His blood, we may receive the fullness of Your grace and truth in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Lent —

At Your command, Abraham prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain; yet, in mercy You provided a ram as a substitute. We give You thanks that on Calvary You spared not Your only Son but sent Him to offer His life as a ransom for many. As we eat and drink His body and blood, grant us, like Abraham our father, to trust in Your promise now fulfilled in Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.

Holy Trinity —

You once revealed Your name to Moses in the burning bush; and through Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, You unveiled the mystery of Your holy name in the Trinity of persons and the Unity of being. Grant that we, who have been baptized and instructed in the Triune name, may faithfully eat and drink of Your Son’s body and blood and worship You in spirit and truth, O Father, through Your Son in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saints’ Days —

By faith the saints of old held fast to Your promise of things hoped for though not yet seen, leaving an example and encouragement for us who walk now by faith and not by sight. Grant that we may faithfully eat and drink this Holy Supper of Your Son’s body and blood and in the union of His mystical body, the Church, be joined in unending praise with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses, Elijah, and all the faithful prophets; the blessed apostles and evangelists, the holy martyrs, and all the saints in glory who fought the good fight of faith before us. Amen.

meet the secretary...

Taunya Smith



Have you called the church office lately? A new voice might have answered! Taunya Smith has joined us in the office as the new secretary. She is now helping with everything from composing bulletins to keeping Quickbooks. If you have not met her already, feel free to poke your head in during the week and introduce yourself! ■



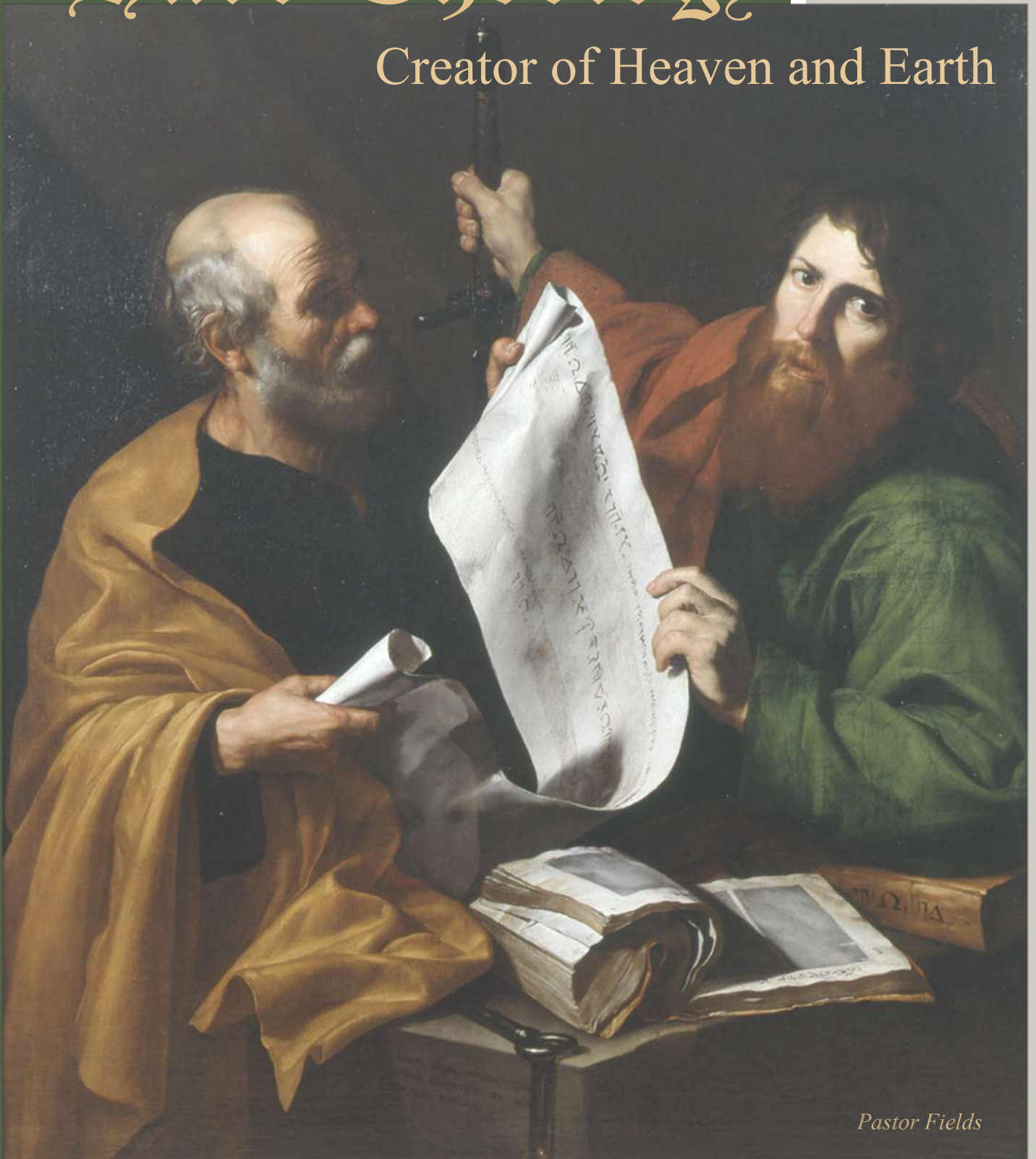
Thunder and lightning and power outages... oh, my! Yes, on a particularly rainy weekend this summer, Christ Lutheran traveled back to a time before Thomas Edison and got to experience Divine Service the old fashioned way. Storms caused a power outage, leaving our building without lights, microphones, organ, or (perhaps most importantly) air conditioning. But, as the hymns says, "This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none!" In other words, the Divine Service shall go on! God provided us with candles, a piano, and even a laptop for Pastor to read the sermon at the pulpit. Heat and humidity, oppressive as they were, were no match for the Body and Blood. Praise be to God, that He provides His good gifts, His life and salvation, to His beloved people... that He is present even in the most unusual circumstances. ■

present even in
unusual circumstances



Hard Theology

Creator of Heaven and Earth



Pastor Fields

Creation is a topic of much anguish these days. Christians say that God created the universe, along with most of humanity. Secularists argue that the universe created itself. Either from some quantum field or a multiverse, those who think themselves scientific think that the universe just is, because it is. It made itself, and it needs no explanation.

This is somewhat nonsense, even for a scientific person, for any scientific person would demand that everything needs a provable explanation, or at least a provable model of how the world came to be. And yet, sadly, science cannot give us this.

Christians tend to rush and say “that’s proof of God! He is the only answer to the question of why there is something rather than nothing!”

I think we Christians are right, and for many reasons, and perhaps I will write an article soon on why there is ‘something instead of nothing.’ But that is not what I want to talk about today.

It is important that we understand what it means when we say that we believe in ‘God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.’

We often get caught up in timelines. Was the universe made in a moment, in six days, in six billion days? Is it old? Is it new? These are all important, but unimportant questions compared to the one question that is answered in the creed, what it means that God is the Creator.

Gerhard, quoting others, writes:

‘Therefore we conclude that creation is an undivided act of the one true God alone, namely, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Dionysius writes “All casual things are common to the one Godhead.” Thomas: “To create befits God according to His being, which is His essence that is common to the three persons.” Basil calls the Father ‘the initial cause’, the Son, the ‘creative’ cause’ and the Holy Spirit, ‘the perfecting cause.’”

When we tend to think of creation, we tend to think of how things started off. We ask ‘well the universe seems to be ticking along pretty well, the only question is how it all got started!’ And at that question, there are two answers: God started it, or nothing started it.

But when it comes to the Creed, where we confess the Father as creator of heaven and earth, we are not talking about ‘how it all got started.’ Far from it. We are talking about how anything ever was anytime, anywhere, anyhow. We are talking about what causes anything to exist at all, whether it be thousands of years ago, today, or a thousand years from now.

By quoting Basil when talking about creation, Gerhard wants us to see that God is not just the creator of all things at some time in the remote past. Rather, by His three persons, He created,

He continues to create, and He will always create. This is to say that, regardless of time or place, He is always the source of all that exists, yesterday, now, and forever.

This is why Luther in his Small Catechism, when he talks about creation, doesn’t just mention those things talked about in Genesis 1 and 2. Rather he includes things like shoes and houses and spouses, meat and drink, and all that sustains us NOW in this bodily life.

This is what the doctrine of creation fundamentally means. It means that in everything in this created life, we are from God and dependent on God, and all that is beautiful is a gift of God, both past, present, and future. For this reason, let us give thanks forevermore. ■



Each day concluded in the sanctuary with the evening prayer office.

VBS: A JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

This summer, our children traveled back to First Century Jerusalem and experienced the events of Holy Week first-hand! From July 19-21, the Fellowship Hall was transformed into a marketplace, complete with tents, rugs, and artifacts; we made our very own dreidels and wore yarmulkes like Hebrew children; and the kids ate pita while Mary Magdalene (Mary Atchley) and Peter (Jonathan Kettler) ran breathlessly to tell us about Jesus' capture and death.

The setting for this year's Vacation Bible School was an immersive opportunity to learn about the salvific work of Jesus on our behalf. The little ones were enthralled by the drama of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the older kids were able to help teach about these deeply significant events. We are grateful to everyone who decorated, volunteered, donated, and prayed... It was a wonderful week!



The kids shared family-style dinner each night... though it's hard to say if the hot dogs or pizza were authentic Jewish fare...

A compelling Mary Magdalene weeps as she tells us about Jesus' crucifixion.



Phoebe colors like a big girl during crafts!



Westin is a pro at weaving.



Miles and William play games while the rain pours outside.



Savannah and Lili decorate their dreidels. *Most* of the paint made it onto the craft...

Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,
I made you out of clay...

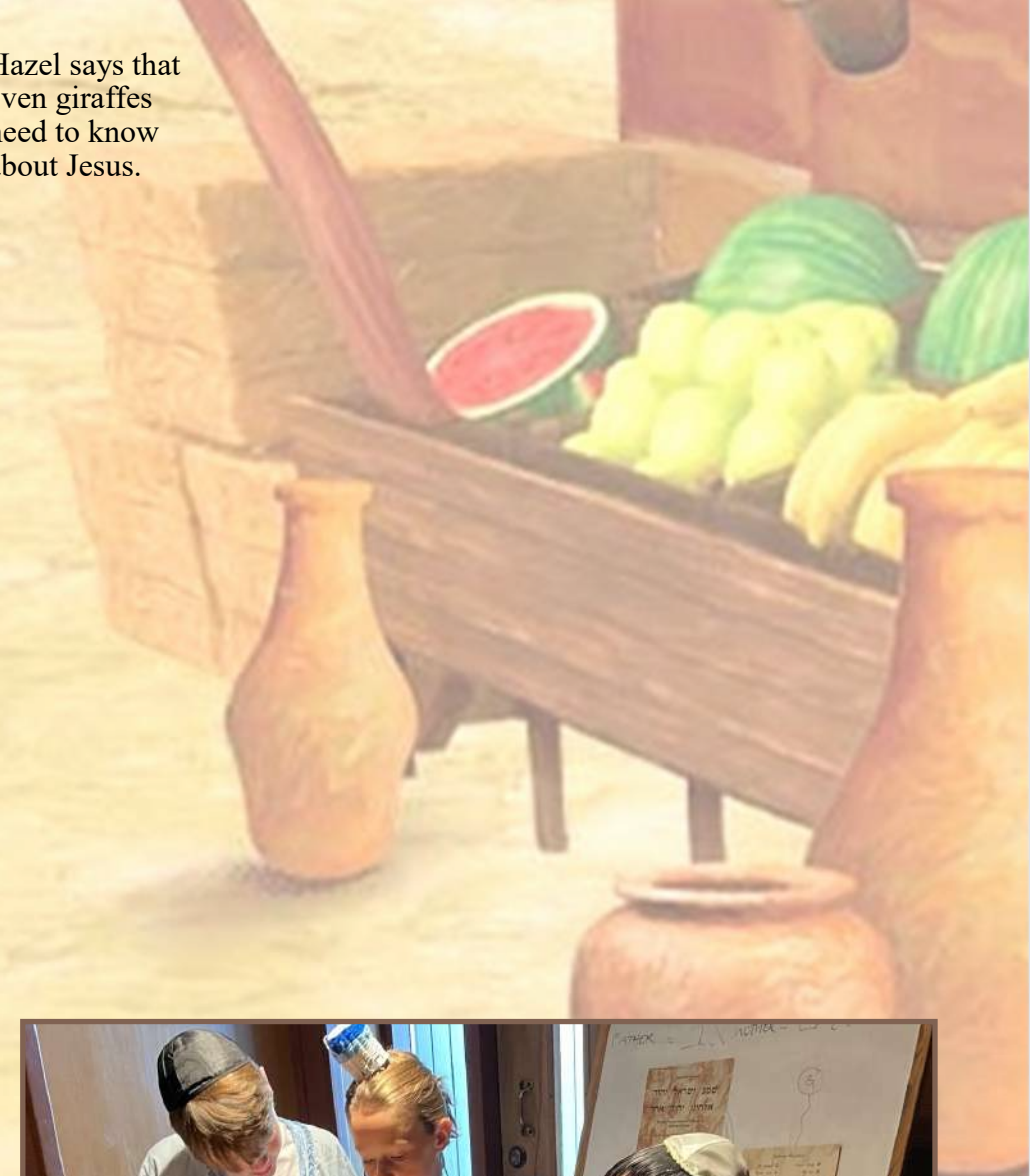


"Hannah" from the day's skit (Emily, of course) poses with a little first-century baby.





Hazel says that even giraffes need to know about Jesus.



Wearing an authentic Israeli robe, Carol led our songs and explained the lesson for each day, leading the children through the events of Jesus' Passion. But pictured above, she's helping to wrangle crafts.



Rabbi Fields taught synagogue school, where the kids learned Hebrew letters, wore kippas, and got to do Torah readings. ■

“... And in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians” (Acts 11:26).

If I were to ask you to stand up and introduce yourself, what would you say? First, you would most likely tell me your name; you might tell me about your family; some might speak about their ethnicity; others might refer to their education or careers. In other words, when we consider our identity, we immediately consider those things that shape our lives in this world. We think of parents, family, education, careers, and the like. We describe ourselves in terms of those things that shape our present existence in this world.

However, if we were to ask a member of the church at Antioch, “Who are you?” I suspect we would get a very different answer. Instead of referring to his personal name and family, rather than describing his ethnicity, career, or education, a member of the church at Antioch would likely answer before all else: “I am a Christian.” The truth of this statement is evident in the stories of the early martyrs. In the middle of the second century a severe persecution broke out against Christians in Lyons and Vienna.

The account of these martyrdoms tells of a certain deacon of the church named Sanctus. It tells us that no matter what question was put to him, Sanctus would simply respond with the words, “I am a Christian.” Thus, the ancient account records the interaction this way: “... but he (Sanctus) resisted them with such determination that he would not even tell them his own name, his race, or the city he was from, whether he was a slave or a freedman. To all their questions he answered in Latin: ‘I am a Christian!’”¹ The record of his martyrdom goes on to say that “the pagan crowd heard not another word from him.”

For these early martyrs, their identities were not essentially determined by their families, birthplaces, ethnicities, careers, bank accounts, or anything else in this world. Rather, their identities were wholly shaped by their relationship to God; and it is this relationship to God that is represented in the simple confession: “I am a Christian.” But what does such a confession actually mean? What does it mean that the disciples were, for the first time, called Christians at Antioch?

For us living in modern America, the name “Christian” is merely an adjective, that is, it is a word that describes merely one aspect of our present existence. We go to a Christian church; we live by a Christian philosophy; we associate with Christian people; we promote Christian values. In other words, being a Christian is an important part of our lives (maybe even the most important part). However, it is not essential to our inner being. Christianity is like a winter coat that we wear, but only when the weather demands it. Being Christian merely affects our appearance in this world—our reputation, our religion, our words, thoughts, and deeds. Yet, as “important” as being Christian is for us, it rarely reaches the depth of our humanity. Being Christian is not as fundamental as our being human. Family, ethnicity, economic status, career—these things determine our identity more than the apostolic faith. Few of us would trade our own personal names for the common name of Christian.



I am a



a Christian

For us, the word “Christian” is merely an adjective. It describes one aspect of our earthly lives. The name Christian represents the religion we have chosen for ourselves. However, this is not at all true for the disciples of Antioch. For them, the name “Christian” is not an adjective but a noun. It not only describes one’s life; it is his life. Being a Christian is more fundamental than personal names, families, or ethnicities; it is more essential to their being than careers or economic status. Indeed, based upon the testimony of the ancient martyrs, being Christian is more essential to their existence than eating, drinking, or breathing; it is more necessary than heart, soul, mind, or body. To be called Christians means that these disciples at Antioch found the whole of their identity in God. And this is true because God had first found His identity in them. In Jesus Christ, God assumed our human nature into His own being. The Son of God did not merely become man in appearance. Our flesh was not like a winter coat that adorned Jesus’ shoulders for a season. Rather, He who is God of God took humanity—body and soul—into the very depth of His own divine life, and through His own death and resurrection He bestowed a new and permanent identity upon humanity. For Jesus, being human is not merely an adjective. The Son of God does not merely look human, act human, and speak like a human. Jesus is human at the core of His being, Jesus is flesh and blood.

Yet, the Son of God abides in flesh and blood so that flesh and blood men like ourselves might abide in Him. By giving our human nature a home in the depth of His being, He gives us a share in His own divine and eternal identity. Here lies the mystery of Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and the hearing of the Word. Christ’s own identity as the Son of the Father lives in us as we pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven.” When we partake of Christ, we become one with Him—flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones. In communion with Christ our identity is fundamentally altered. Here we are Christians—not because we merely act, speak, or think like Jesus—but because Christ Himself lives within us. At Christ’s altar our families and ethnicities are forgotten; our careers, economic status, as well as every other earthly association must be left behind. At the altar there is only Christ given by the Father in the power of the Spirit. He is given to be our identity, our breath, our food, drink, and sustenance now and forever. In communion with Christ, the confession of the martyrs becomes our confession. We are Christians. To Christ be all the glory forever and ever. Amen. ■

Rev. Dr. James G. Bushur serves as an Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

This sermon was published in For the Life of the World, January 2007.

¹Cf. Herbert Musurillo, trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, p.69.



St. Anselm's
Meditation upon the
Holy Cross

This month, we celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14th). This day gives us a moment to reflect upon the weapon by which Christ sacked the kingdom of hell and accomplished our salvation. Though it appears to the world to be an ignoble instrument of death, to the Christian it is truly the Tree of Life. For Christ Himself has said, "My grace is made perfect in weakness."

"Holy Cross, which calls to mind the cross whereon our Lord Jesus Christ died, to bring us back from that eternal death to which our misery was leading us, to the eternal life we lost by sinning. I adore, I venerate, and I glory in that cross which you represent to us, and by that cross I adore our merciful Lord and what he has in mercy done for us.... We do not acknowledge you because of the cruelty that godless and foolish men prepared you to effect upon the most gentle Lord, but because of the wisdom and goodness of him who of his own free will took you up. For they could not have done anything unless his wisdom had permitted it, and he could not suffer except that in his mercy he willed it. They chose you that they might carry out their evil deeds; he chose you that he might fulfil the work of his goodness. They that by you they might hand over the righteous to death; he that through you he might save sinners from death. They that they might kill life; he that he might destroy death. They that they might condemn the Saviour; he that he might save the condemned. They that they might bring death to the living; he to bring life to the dead. They acted foolishly and cruelly; he wisely and mercifully. Therefore, O Cross to be wondered at, we do not value you because of the intention of their cruel folly, but according to the working of mercy and wisdom." ■

(The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion, pp. 102, 103)



THIS MONTH

At Christ Lutheran



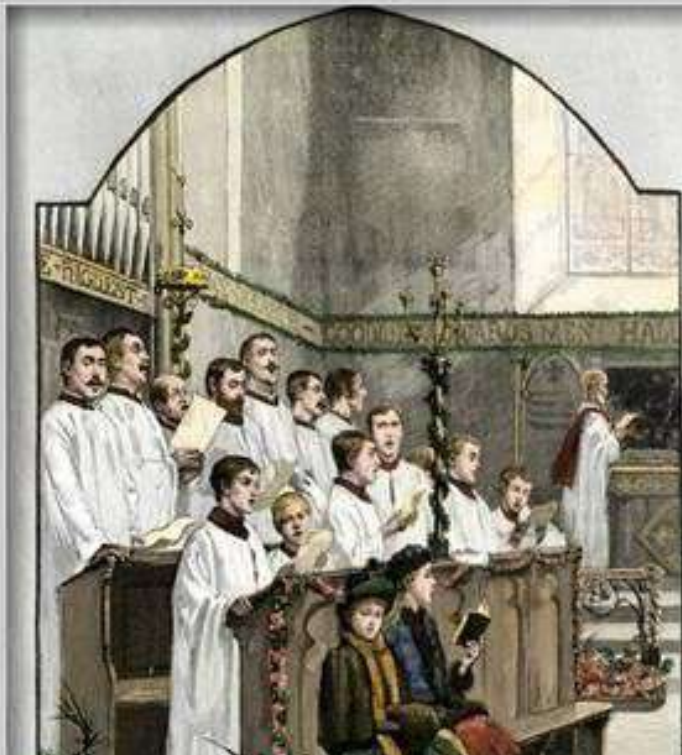
✠ ALTAR GUILD ✠

September 14
5:00 p.m.



Various & Asundry
— Topics for Today —

September 25
5:00 p.m.



Choir Returns!

September 8
Thursdays @ 6 p.m.

Gemutlichkeit



Good News for Anxious Christians

Sunday
September 11
5:00 p.m.
Fields Home
Chapters 4-5

Christ Lutheran



Goodlett Home
Saturday
October 16
4:00-6:30 p.m.

Artwork in This Issue



Cover: *Christ Pantocrator*,
St. Catherine's
Monastery at Mount
Sinai, 6th century.

P. 4: Woodcut of Luther with
Sick Persons in
Wittenberg, Gustav
Koenig, 1850.

p. 8: Design for an organ,
Johann Georg Dirr, 18th
century.

p. 26: *Saint Peter & Saint
Paul*, Jusepe de Ribera,
1616.

p. 28: Jerusalem Marketplace
Images, Group
Publishing, 2022.

p. 33: *Triumph of Faith—
Christian Martyrs in the
Time of Nero*, Eugene
Romain Thirion, 19th
century.

JOIN US FOR BIBLE STUDY

bible & breaky | fridays @ 6:30 a.m.



THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

+ September 18 +
(Observed)



SAINT MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

+ September 25 +
(Observed)

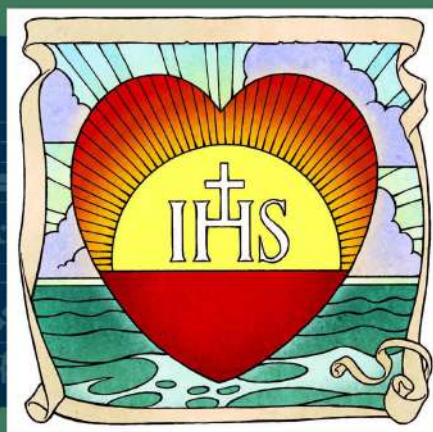


DAVID'S HARP

A CENTER FOR MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Sunday, September 11
 9:00 a.m.

Come hear Pastor Holowach present during Sunday school on the Lutheran musical conservatory, David's Harp!



Saints' Days in August

- 3 Sts. Joanna, Mary, & Salome, Myrrhbearers
- 10 St. Lawrence, Archdeacon & Martyr
- 15 St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord
- 16 St. Isaac, Patriarch
- 17 St. Johann Gerhard, Theologian
- 19 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbott
- 20 St. Samuel, Prophet
- 23 St. Zacchaeus
- 24 St. Bartholomew, Apostle
- 25 St. Louis, King & Confessor
- 27 St. Monica, Mother of St. Augustine
- 28 St. Augustine of Hippo, Bishop & Confessor
- 29 The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist



Saints' Days in September

- 1 St. Joshua
- 2 St. Hannah
- 3 St. Gregory the Great, Bishop & Confessor
- 3 St. Phoebe, Deaconess
- 4 St. Moses, Prophet
- 5 Sts. Zacharias & Elizabeth
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 16 St. Cyprian of Carthage, Bishop & Martyr
- 17 St. Hildegard of Bingen, Abbess
- 21 St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist
- 22 St. Jonah, Prophet
- 29 St. Michael & All Angels
- 30 Jerome, Translator of Holy Scripture

When they tell you traditional liturgy
doesn't rock hard enough...



Good Shepherd Institute

23rd Annual Conference
November 6-8, 2022

*The steadfast love of the
Lord endures forever;
his faithfulness to all generations.
(Ps. 100:5)*



THE GOOD SHEPHERD
INSTITUTE

ACTSFW

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA



Join us for a baby shower honoring
CHRISTINA GALLARNO

SATURDAY

OCT

1

2022

11 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING
417 WEST OAK CIRCLE • MADISON, MS
RSVP TO ALLISON AT 601.842.6878

**Registered at Target*

September 2022

PRAYER FAMILIES and BIRTHDAYS							
Gallarno Family							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Serving this month: Elder—Gary Atchley Greeters—Rush & Allison Agent Ushers—Bruce Bodkin, Mark Ochs				1 St. Joshua	2 6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Hannah	3 St. Gregory the Great St. Phoebe	
Barbara Glenn 4—Carol Yenish 6—Ceceila Dorsey 10—Emma Agent 10—Miles Agent	4 PENTECOST XIII 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service St. Moses	5 Sts. Zacharias & Elizabeth 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	6	7	8 6:00 p.m. Choir	9 6:30 a.m. Bible Study 9:00 a.m. Quilting	
	11 PENTECOST XIV 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Gemutlichkeit	12	13 6:15 p.m. Council Mtg.	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross 5:00 p.m. Altar Guild Meetin	15 6:00 p.m. Choir	16 6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Cyprian of Carthage	
	18 EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (OBSERVED) 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	19	20	21 St. Matthew	22 St. Jonah 6:00 p.m. Choir	23 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	
	Haines Family 23—Laura Rawson 24—Mary Atchley						
Merina Hansen 27—Becky Nelson 30—Becky Hathcock	25 FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS (OBSERVED) 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia	26	27	28 6:00 p.m. Ladies' Night Out	29 St. Michael & All Angels 6:00 p.m. Choir	30 6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Jerome	
Allen & Sabrina Goodlett						17 St. Hildegard of Bingen	