

St. Stephen Lutheran Church of the East Bay & Central Valley

(A Congregation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession)

www.ststephenclc.org

Worshiping Every Sunday in the East Bay at 9 a.m. in

Grace Lutheran Church

1836 B St., Hayward, CA 94541-3140

Worshiping in the Central Valley at 2 p.m. - 1st & 3rd Sundays of
the Month

Atria Senior Living - Bayside Landing - 1st Floor Activity Room
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Pastor: Steven Karp

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Organist: Elizabeth Karp

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Rogate - The Fifth Sunday After Easter - 10 May 2015

Liturgy — Page 5 in The Lutheran Hymnal

HYMNS: 221 Hark! Ten Thousand Harps And Voices (1-4)
454 Prayer Is The Soul's Sincere Desire (1-4 & 5-8; tune 396)
496 Hark! The Voice Of Jesus Crying

Sermon Text: Colossians 4,2-6

Sermon Theme: Living A Life Of Prayer

1. Pray In Watchfulness And Thanksgiving
2. Pray That God Would Open Doors
3. Pray That We Would Go Through Open Doors

INTROIT: With the voice of singing declare and tell this: utter it even to the end of the earth, Hallelujah! The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob: Hallelujah, Hallelujah! Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all you lands: sing forth the honor of His name; make His praise more glorious. **Glory be to the Father ...**

COLLECT: O Lord God, heavenly Father, through Your Son You have promised us that whatever we ask in His name You will give us: We beseech You, keep us in Your Word, and grant us Your Holy Spirit, that He may govern us according to Your will; protect us from the power of the devil, from false doctrine and worship; and also defend our lives against all danger. Grant us Your blessing and peace, that we may in all things perceive Your merciful help, and both now and forever praise and glorify You as our gracious Father; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever the One true God, world without end. **Amen.**

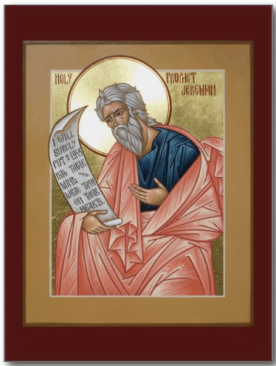
Old Testament

Jeremiah 29,4-14

Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, ⁵ “Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens, and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your

sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. ⁷ And seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.”

⁸ For thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, “Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. ⁹ For they prophesy falsely in My name; I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.



¹⁰ For thus says the LORD, “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good Word to you, to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and come and pray

to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ And I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from the places where I have driven you,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place where I sent you into exile.”

Epistle

Colossians 4,2-6

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the Word,

so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity [literally: redeeming the time]. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

GRADUAL

Ask and you will receive,

That your joy may be made full.

O Come, let us sing to the LORD;

Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,

Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

For the LORD is a great God,

And a great King above all gods.

Come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

For He is our God,

and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

I shall lift up the cup of salvation,

And call upon the name of the LORD. [sing: triple Hallelujah]

Gospel

John 16,23-33

Response: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

[Jesus said to His disciples:] “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give

it to you in My name. ²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming, when I will speak to you no more in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in My name; and I do not



Concluding speech to the disciples by James Tissot

say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; ²⁷ for the Father Himself

L o v e s y o u ,

because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. ²⁸ I

came forth from

the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father.” ²⁹ His disciples said, “Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech. ³⁰ Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.” ³¹ Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? ³² Behold an hour is coming, and has already come; for you are to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” [Scripture from the *New American Standard Bible*,

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Response: Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

† † †

Lessons for 17 May – The Sixth Sunday after Easter –
Exaudi, the Sunday After the Ascension

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31,31–34

Epistle: Ephesians 3,14–21

Gospel: John 15,26—16,4

Weekly Scripture Verse: Blessed be God, | Who has not turned away my prayer, | Nor His lovingkindness from me. (Psalm 66,20).

Rogate is a Latin word which means “pray” and its reference is to today’s Gospel from John.

Today’s Gradual is based on selected verses from John 16 and Psalm 95.

Bible Study – Hayward, Tuesday, 12 May, 2 p.m.

– Stockton on Tuesday, 26 May, at 2 p.m.

Next Service in Stockton – Sunday, 17 May, at 2 p.m.

ILL. In your prayers, please remember Nancy, Roy and his brother Gerald; Cindy Hartman (Pr. Jay Hartman's wife); Jean Niblett; Marlene Clappier; Don Luebke, and Rose, one of his care givers; Sue (the Karps' neighbor who is undergoing chemotherapy), Sue



(Carolyn's friend), Don Drews; Richard Hocker; Ruth Scheuermann; James Sandeen; the Breeden twins, Chloe and Dagny.

Handouts – President Eichstadt's May Pastoral Letter; on the second page he also has a brief report about the ongoing meeting between representatives of the CLC, WELS, and ELS. Their next meeting is scheduled at the end of August.

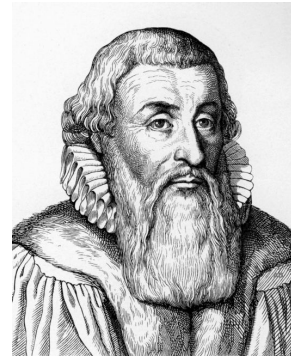
Call News. Trinity Lutheran, Watertown, and Zion Lutheran, Hidewood Twp., SD, have called the Rev. Paul Krause, pastor of Faith Lutheran, Markesan, WI. They have called the Rev. Daniel Fleischer, emeritus, to serve during the pastoral vacancy and he has accepted the Call. Messiah Lutheran, Eau Claire, WI, has called Miss Naomi Bernthal of Eau Claire to teach the 2nd–3rd grade level at Messiah School. Miss Bernthal is a 2014 graduate of ILC's teacher training department. Gethsemane Lutheran, Spokane Valley, WA, has called Teacher Quinn Sprengeler of Redemption Lutheran, Lynnwood, WA.

A Message from Pr. Ohlmann Regarding Nepal: I just got off the phone [30 April] with Raju who recently spoke with his brother Rajan ...We just learned tonight that eight HCLCN members in rural congregations were killed in the earthquake. Two of them were children. Many more homes and church building were also reported destroyed. Please continue to pray!"

John Arndt (27 December 1555 – 11 May 1621) — is the most

influential devotional author the Lutheran Church has produced.

He was born at Ballenstedt, in Anhalt, and studied in several universities. He was at Helmstedt in 1576 and at Wittenberg in 1577. At Wittenberg the crypto-Calvinist controversy was then at its height, and he took the side of Melancthon and the crypto-Calvinists. He continued his studies in Strasbourg, under the professor of Hebrew, Johannes Pappus (1549–1610), a zealous Lutheran, the crown of whose life's work was the forcible suppression of Calvinistic preaching and worship in the day, and who had great influence over him.



In Basel, again, Arndt studied theology under Simon Sulzer (1508–1585), a broad-minded divine of Lutheran sympathies, whose aim was to reconcile the churches of the Helvetic and Wittenberg confessions. In 1581 he went back to Ballenstedt, but was soon recalled to active life by his appointment to the pastorate at Badeborn in 1583.

After some time his Lutheran tendencies aroused the anger of the authorities, who were of the Reformed Church. Consequently, in 1590 he was deposed for refusing to remove the pictures from his church and discontinue the use of exorcism at baptism. Arndt insisted on a subscription to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. He founded an asylum in Quedlinburg (1590), and afterwards was transferred to St Martin's church at Brunswick in 1599. He later worked in

Eisleben, and until 1621 as Generalsuperintendent in Celle.

Arndt's fame rests on his writings. These were mainly of a mystical and devotional kind. His principal work, *Wahres Christentum* (book 1: 1605; books 1–4: 1606–1610), which has been translated into most European languages, and in English as *True Christianity*, has served as the foundation of many books of devotion.

Nikolaus von Amsdorf, Lutheran Reformer (3 December 1483–14 May 1565). Amsdorf came from an old and established noble family; interestingly enough, his mother was



the sister of Johann von Staupitz, who was a charter member of the University of Wittenberg and later friend of Luther. In 1502, Amsdorf became one of the first students at the new university in Wittenberg and in 1511 received his degree in theology. He was influenced by Luther and became one of his staunchest supporters as well as

consistently supporting Lutheran orthodoxy. He was with Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521) and helped Luther translate the Bible into German. In 1524, he went to Magdeburg to help establish the Reformation both there as well as in surrounding cities. He was a signer of the Smalcald Articles (1537). In 1542, at Luther's urging, he was installed as the first Lutheran Bishop of Naumberg–Zeitz. After Luther's death (1546) and the battle of Mühlberg, Amsdorf had to leave Naumberg and seek the protection of the Duke of Weimar. In

1548, he helped found the University of Jena, where he also edited one of the first collections of Luther's works. Jena became a bastion of Lutheran orthodoxy as opposed to Wittenberg, which had fallen under Melanchthon's influence. He spent his last years in Eisenach, where he died and was buried under the altar of the Church of St. George. Throughout his life he was a strong opponent of Melanchthon's attempts to compromise Lutheran theology. In attempting to refute the thesis that good works are necessary for salvation (put forth by Geog Major), however, Amsdorf went too far and asserted that good works are "detrimental and injurious" to salvation. While Amsdorf appealed to Luther's writing, what Luther said was that good works are injurious to salvation if one believes that by good works one is justified – made right – with God. The Formula of Concord of 1580 condemns both extremes as not reflecting the correct Scriptural position on good works (see Formula of Concord, Epitome, IV, "Good Works" and Formula of Concord, Solid Declaratio, IV, "Good Works"). Amsdorf never married.

Celebrating Mother's Day, Luther-Style

By Emil B. Huntington

May 2010

Martin Luther could regard any day as Mother's Day. The value he placed on the maternal vocation stood in sharp contrast to the views of his contemporaries. The Roman Church had barred its clergy from marriage and its procreative fruit. Women were thought holier if they became nuns rather than wives or mothers. Martin Luther fought against this idea for much of his life. He wrote (quoted in Karant-Nunn and

Wiesner-Hanks, 123):

The godless world is moved neither by God's ordinance nor by the sweet nature of little children who are produced in marriage; it sees only the shortcomings and hardships in marriage—it does not see the great treasure and benefit that is in it.

Luther valued motherhood highly, recognizing its origin in the very design of God's creation. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1,28) was, in Luther's estimation, "more than a command, namely, a divine ordinance which is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore" (Luther's Works, 45:17). In brief, God created women for motherhood (Luther's Works, 5:355):

The saintly women desire nothing else than the natural fruit of their bodies. For by nature woman has been created for the purpose of bearing children. Therefore she has breasts; she has arms for the purpose of nourishing, cherishing, and carrying her offspring. It was the intention of the Creator that women should bear children and that men should beget them.

Luther frequently celebrated the blessings of children and the wonderful calling of motherhood.



This quotation from Luther is just as jarring today as it was in the sixteenth century. In Luther's day, church authorities had despised motherhood and privileged celibacy. Today, society has transformed motherhood from a badge of honor to a

symbol of disgrace. Sure, Hallmark still sells plenty of Mother's Day cards, but just as this celebration can be neatly

scheduled on the calendar, so also motherhood must fit the schedule of one's busy lifestyle, rather than vice versa. Our "pro-choice" world insists that true womanhood requires the ability to choose against motherhood. But if motherhood is to be a choice, shouldn't it be God who does the choosing? After all, it is God who puts to death and brings to life (Deuteronomy 32,39), and it is God who opens and closes wombs (Genesis 29,31, 30,22).

Luther frequently celebrated the blessings of children and the wonderful calling of motherhood. For example (quoted in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, 183):

A pregnant woman is a divine work, giving birth, etc. Marriage is the fount of the entire human race, and nevertheless this sacred origin of life is concealed and held in contempt, such that it has the reputation of being a fleshly, worldly way of life. If all the leaves in the meadow of Torgau were to speak in tongues, they could not adequately preach the praise of marriage or the turpitude of celibacy.

Along with this, Luther makes the point that giving birth is not enough; parents must also raise those children. "But it is not enough that a child is born...for heathens also bring forth children. A person has to raise children to the service, praise, and honor of God" (quoted in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, 91). Well does Luther understand the responsibility of Christian parents (Luther's Works, 45:46):

But the greatest good in married life, that which makes all suffering and labor worth while, is that God grants offspring and commands that they be brought up to worship and serve Him. In all the world this is the

noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. ... Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal.

Luther also acknowledged the hardships of marriage and procreation. He was not ignorant of the difficulty, in this sin-saturated world. Couples would have a hard time living together. Husbands would have a difficult time being the loving heads, while wives would have a difficult time submitting to their husbands. As Luther warned (quoted in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, 183):

The devil always finds a pretext to be against this estate, for he sees both the original sin and the unhappiness, trouble, and toil that are ascribed to it. He can use these two things well, and wants to make marital life more difficult for everyone or even destroy it. For that reason we must lift this estate even higher, praise and honor it even more, adorn and embellish it, just as God Himself does.

Luther understood that it was through marriage that God blesses all the institutions of the earth, and that it was through marital procreation that children should be born, and the church would prosper. If the devil were to destroy motherhood, he would achieve a great victory against the church. There would be fewer children being born, and fewer being raised in God's Word, which would mean fewer pastors,

teachers, and missionaries. There would also be fewer men who knew how to care for women and children with compassion and sensitivity, since those men themselves would never have been raised by a mother.

Whether you are a mother or not, surely you know of someone who is. Whether today is Mother's Day or not,



remember that any day can be. Offer your encouragement and support. You'll find plenty of suggestion

s for that in Holy Scripture and the writings of the man who worked so earnestly to restore the church to its biblical foundation, Martin Luther.

Sources:

Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-present.

Karant-Nunn, Susan C., and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, eds. *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Mr. Emil B. Huntington is a Lutheran writer who lives in southwestern Wisconsin. His hobbies center around his wife and children, their adventures in home schooling, and their hope to leave a Christian legacy for future generations.

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Mothers Day, Luther-Style.” The Hausvater Project, May 2010.
www.hausvater.org.

Ascension Day - Thursday, 14 May

Old Testament	Isaiah h 57,15
Epistle	Acts 1,1-11
The Holy Gospel	Mark 16,14-20

Ascension Day Thoughts. At the death of a beloved friend we are filled with sorrow even though we know thta his lot has been bettered. With this frame of mind, we might expect the



Church to commemorate her Savior’s Ascension with at least some expression of sadness; but the opposite is true. The Feast is one of unrestrained joy. We rejoice over what the mystery meant for Christ and what the mystery means for us.

Today Christ triumphs, it is a victory that He fully merited. Recall but a few phases and incident from His earthly life. He left the throne of His Father, Humbled Himself in the womb of the Virgin, lay in Bethlehem’s rough stable, fled from His own

people inot Egypt, and passed years in Nazareth as a common laborer. Tirelessly He searched for the lost sheep in the land of Israel. His own brethren requited Him with nothing but

unkindness and misunderstanding. And then, beginning on Olivet and ending on Golgotha, He patiently paid the price of our redemption. All this because He loved us, because He sought to free us from Satan’s power and effect our return home to a heavenly fatherland.

This work, the object of His love and His life’s blood, is now completed. He returns to heaven as a conqueror; Son stands before Father and tells of His mission completed. We can characterize today’s feast as that of heavenly enthronement, His coronation as King over heaven and earth.



For us too the Ascension is an occasion of deepest rejoicing. The glorification of Christ in this mystery is likewise our glorification, and elevation of our human nature. This truth made a profound impression upon the Church fathers. Our human nature now partakes of the highest divine honors as in human form Christ, our brother, enters heaven. In His human nature He sits upon the throne of God and will remain there for all eternity. Therefore we, as human beings, enjoy a unique distinction. A member of our race, our Head, is seated at God’s right hand: as members of His Body, a divine nobility is conferred upon us. See how concisely the message is worded in the Proper Preface, “Who... was taken up into heaven that He might make us partakers of His divine nature.” (Source: Pius Parsch, The Church’s Year of Grace, vol. 3 Easter to Pentecost, [Collegetville, MN, 1953]:

163)

An Ascension Day Prayer: O Jesus Christ, almighty Son of God, You are no longer in humiliation here on earth, but are seated at the right hand of Your Father, Lord over all things: We beseech You, send us Your Holy Spirit; give Your Church pious pastors, preserve Your Word, control and restrain the devil and all who would oppress us; mightily uphold Your Kingdom, until all Your enemies have been put under Your feet, that we may hold the victory over sin, death, and the devil; through You, Who live and reign with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever the One true God, now and forever. Amen.