

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
3318 Brookside Rd., Stockton, CA 95219

Pastor: Steven Karp

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Organist: Elizabeth Karp

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**Quinquagesima Sunday – The Last Sunday Before Lent –
7 February 2016**

A Service with Holy Communion

(visitors are asked to speak with the pastor before communing)

Liturgy — Page 15 in The Lutheran Hymnal

HYMNS: 351 Love Divine, All Love Excelling
375 If Thy Beloved Son, O Lord
51 Now May He Who From The Dead

Sermon Text: Luke 18,31-43

Sermon Theme: Clueless On The Road To Jerusalem

1. Jesus Is Clued-In
2. Clueless Disciples
3. Putting Two And Two Together

INTROIT: O Lord, be my strong Rock: for a House of Defense to save me. You are my Rock and my Fortress: therefore for Your name's sake lead me and guide me. In You, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Your righteousness. **Glory be to the Father ...**

COLLECT: O Lord, we beseech You, mercifully hear our prayers and, having set us free from the bonds of sin, defend us from all evil; through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with You and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns, ever the one true God, world without end. **Amen.**

Old Testament

Isaiah 35,3–10

Encourage the exhausted hands, and strengthen the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those with palpitating heart,
“Take courage, fear not.

Behold, your God will come with vengeance;
The recompense of God will come,
But He will save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.

For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the desert.

7 And the scorched land will become a pool,
And the thirsty ground springs of water;
In the haunt of jackals, its resting place,
Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

8 And a highway will be there, a roadway,
And it will be called "The Highway of Holiness."

The unclean will not travel on it,
But it will be for him who walks that way,
And fools will not wander on it.

9 No lion will be there,
Nor will any vicious beast go up on it;
These will not be found there.

But the redeemed will walk there,

10 And the ransomed of the LORD will return,
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.

They will find gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Epistle

1 Corinthians 13,1-13

If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant. ⁵ Love does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not

provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.



LOVE NEVER FAILS.
1 Corinthians 13:4-9

⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child,

reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

GRADUAL

You are my Rock and my Fortress;

For Your name's sake You will lead and guide me.

In You, O LORD, I have taken refuge;

Let me never be ashamed; in Your righteousness deliver me.

Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly;

Be to me a Rock of Strength.

Into Your hand I commend my spirit;

You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of Truth.

I will rejoice and be glad in Your steadfast love,

Because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul.

You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy,

You have set my feet in a large place.

Christ has humbled Himself and became obedient unto death,

Even the death of the Cross. Amen.

The Holy Gospel

Luke 18,31-43

Response: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

Then He [that is, Jesus] took the Twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the Prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.³² For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon,³³ and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.”³⁴ But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

³⁵ As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging.³⁶ Now hearing a crowd going by, he began to inquire what this was.³⁷ They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.³⁸ And he called out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”³⁹ Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”⁴⁰ And Jesus stopped and commanded that

he be brought to Him; and when he came near, He questioned him,⁴¹



“What do you want Me to do for you?” And he said, “Lord, I want to regain my sight!”⁴² And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you

well [or, saved you].”⁴³ Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God. [Scripture from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, used by permission]

Response: Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

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Lessons for 14 February — *Invocavit Sunday (Lent 1)*

Old Testament: Genesis 3,1-24

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6,1-10

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 4,1-11

Weekly Scripture Verse: Jesus said: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.” (Luke 18,31)

Next Service in Stockton – Today at 2 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Service at Mountain View — 10 February. Our sister congregation in Mountain View will have a service on Ash Wednesday at 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday inaugurates the season of Lent.

Quinquagesima is a Latin word which means “fiftieth,” and indicates 50 days before Easter (the early church excluded some days in its calculation). Today is also called Esto mihi Sunday, from the Latin words of the Introit: “Be to me...”

Today’s Gradual consists of selections from Psalm 31.

Bible Study – Hayward –Tuesday, 16 February, at 2 p.m.

Stockton – Tuesday, 23 March , at 1 p.m.

(There is no Bible Study in Hayward this week since I have an appointment to see another neurosurgeon at UCSF)

ILL. In your prayers, please remember Nancy and Roy Cameron; Jean Niblett; Marlene Clappier; Don Luebke, Don’s nephew Leigh, and Rose, one of Don’s care givers; Sue (the Karps’ neighbor who is undergoing chemotherapy), Sue (Carolyn’s friend), Don Drews; Richard Hocker; Ruth Scheuermann; Pr. Doug Priestap (Calgary); Pr. Robert List (Spokane); Pr. Steven Karp; Mary Ryan (of Eau Claire, WI).



Call News: Gethsemane Lutheran, Spokane Valley, WA, has called Nathan Wales of Holy Trinity Lutheran, West Columbia, SC, to be principal and teacher. Mt. Zion Lutheran, Madison Heights MI, (Detroit Area) has called the Rev. John M.

Johannes, pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran, Detroit Lakes, MN, and St. Paul’s Lutheran, Ponsford, MN. The Rev. Vance Fossum, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran, West Columbia, SC, has announced his intention to retire from the full-time public ministry as of July 3, 2016. The congregation has called the Rev. Neal Radichel, pastor of Luther Memorial Lutheran, Fond du Lac, WI. Mt. Zion Lutheran, Madison Heights, MI, has called the Rev. Luke Bernthal, pastor of Grace Lutheran, Valentine, NE, St. Paul’s Lutheran, White River, SD, and Peace Lutheran, Mission, SD.

Handouts – Higher Things Reflection: Lent & Holy Week – February 10 2016–March 26, 2016 – devotional booklet

CLC President Eichstadt’s February 2016 Pastoral Letter

The CLC’s Board of Doctrine’s Response to the “Joint Statement” worked out between the CLC, WELS, & ELS and which was distributed last Sunday; this is being released with the approval of CLC President Eichstadt: While the Board of Doctrine is not specifically involved in the on-going discussions with the WELS/ELS it has drawn up a response to the meetings at the request of the CLC committee. This response was sent to the committee before Christmas. We have expressed our concerns as well as some questions to which we believe the WELS/ELS should react, or at least of which they should be aware.

As far as the Joint Statement is concerned we appreciate the content and substance of it, one of which is the removal of the word “persistence.” However, we are not convinced that it is of itself a settlement of past differences

without clear acknowledgment by WELS of past official resolutions that were the cause of the severance of fellowship. We believe further that the substance of the Joint Statement has to be tested in the crucible of present practices which have still moved former WELS pastors to seek colloquy into the CLC, and former WELS members to join the CLC.

The three church bodies, as far as we have been led to believe, acknowledge that other issues must be addressed before there can be a resumption of fellowship. Given that acknowledgement by the three bodies we are also concerned that the release of the Joint Statement before all issues are addressed and settled will potentially cause confusion among many CLC members, as well as to such WELS/ELS members who might contemplate membership in the CLC.

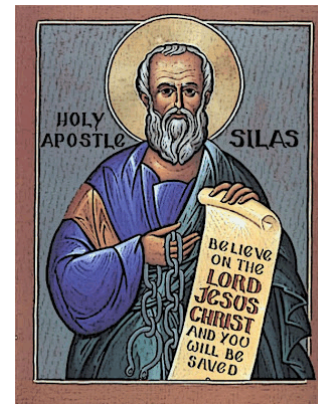
We are informing the CLC clergy of our concerns lest the idea be garnered that through silence on the Board's part that we are signed on to the Joint Statement as a settlement of past differences. CLC Board of Doctrine, Daniel Fleischer, Chairman.

Georg Wagner (Latin: "Carpentarius) (? – 8 February 1527) – Martyr. Little is known of his life except that he was a Catholic priest in Bavaria who was burned at the stake in front of the city hall in Munich. The indictment against him was in four parts: he denied the real presence in Holy Communion, he denied the power of a priest to forgive sins, he denied the efficacy of Baptism, he denied that any man has the power to bring God down from heaven in the mass. He was given a chance to recant but refused. (Source: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie)

Silas (10 February). Silas. Saint Paul chose Silas, a leader in the church at Jerusalem, to accompany him on his second missionary journey from Antioch to Asia Minor and Macedonia (Acts 15,40). Silas, also known as Silvanus, was imprisoned with Paul in Philippi (Acts 16,16–40) and experienced the riots in Thessalonica (Acts 17,1–9) and Berea (Acts 17,10–15).

They were apart for some length of time, after which he rejoined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18,1–5). Apparently, he remained there for an extended period.

One account stands out for most readers of the New Testament. The time Paul and Silas shared in the Philippian



prison gave them a special opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. God freed their bonds during an earthquake but they refused to escape and instead saved their jailer from committing suicide because of his responsibility for them. The Lord used these two and the surrounding events to witness to the jailer about His love and forgiveness through

Christ Jesus. Working through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit brought him and his household to faith in Jesus and led them to be baptized.

Aside from these accounts, the Scriptures record little else about Silas and his relationship with Paul. Tradition has Silas becoming the first bishop of Corinth; he later died in Macedonia. (Source: mostly from Aardvark Alley Blog)

Michael Walther the Elder, Lutheran Theologian (6 April

1593 – 10 February 1662). Walther was the son of a Nuernberg merchant and town councilor. His father died when he was young and his mother wanted him to become a merchant. His intellectual abilities were recognized and he soon entered the Gymnasium in Wittenberg and in 1610 began studies at the University of Wittenberg. In 1614 he earned his Master's degree in Theology. In 1617 he earned his Doctorate at Jena. In 1618, he became the court preacher in Braunschweig–Lueneburg and in 1623 became a Professor of Theology at the University of Helmstedt. In 1626 he moved to the court of East Friesland, where he was also the general Superintendent; in 1631, as superintendent, he published a new provincial church order. In 1632 he returned to the court of Braunschweig–Lueneburg. He died in Celle in 1662. In 1620 in Halberstadt, he married Margaretha Gleißenberger; the union was blessed with seven sons and eight daughters; one son, Michael Walther the Younger, and five daughters survived him



He is best known for his books on Biblical interpretation, *Officina Biblica* (1636) and *Harmonia Biblica* (1620). In his books, he championed an orthodox interpretation of the Scriptures and resolved so-called “Bible difficulties,” establishing a framework by which “contradictions” in the Biblical text might be successfully resolved.

Johann Michael Altenberg, Pastor and Musician (27 May

1584 – 12 February 1640). He was the son of a blacksmith and was born in Erfurt. In 1601 he became the cantor at St. Andrew's in Erfurt, studied theology, and in 1607 became the rector of the Reglerschule in Erfurt. In 1609 he became the Pastor at the parishes of Ilversgehofen and Marbach, near Erfurt. In 1610 he moved to Tröchtelborn, near Gotha, where he was also the Cantor; he stayed there until 1621. During these years he published most of his music. He then became the pastor at St. Boniface at Gross-Sommern near Erfurt. In 1636 the town and congregation was decimated by the plague;



his wife died in 1637, and of their 13 children only three survived him. The Thirty Years War drove him back to Erfurt, where he served at St. Andrews until his death. His song, “Verzage nicht, du Häuflein klein!” became a marching song for Gustavus Adolphus; in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, this is 263, “O Little Flock, Fear Not The Foe.”

Benjamin Schmolck, Pastor and Musician (21 December 1672 –12 February 1737). He was born at Brauchitzchdorf,



where his father was the pastor. From 1693–1697 he studied theology at Leipzig. After his studies he returned home to assist his 70-year old father. He was ordained as a deacon at the Peace Church in Schweidnitz (in Silesia) in 1702. In 1714 he became the pastor of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Schweidnitz, and remained

there until his death. He wrote a number of devotional books, which included his hymns, which hymns totaled 1,183. Even though he was influenced by pietism, it was said that the basis of his faith and hymnody was a strong Confessionalism. He was very popular and during his lifetime was called “the second Gerhardt” and “the Silesian Rist.” Hymns of his in The Lutheran Hymnal are: 1 “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty”; 300 “Dearest Jesus We Are here”; 470 “My Jesus, As Thou Will”; and, 571 “What Our Father Does is Well.”

Valentin Ernst Löscher, Theologian and Hymnist (29 December 1673 – 12 February 1749). Born in Sonderhausen, he was the son of the Regional Superintendent of Religion. He studied philosophy, history, and religion at Wittenberg and in 1695 became a lecturer in philosophy at that university. In



*Valentin Ernst Löscher:
K. Theol. Doctor, Ober-Consistorial,
Rath und Superintendent.*

1698 he was appointed Superintendent at Jütebog, 1701 in Delitzsch, and in 1707 he returned as a professor to Wittenberg. In 1709 he became the Pastor at the Church of the Cross and superintendent in Dresden, where he served until he died. He was a champion of Lutheran orthodoxy, especially against pietism, writing the “Complete Timotheus Verinus” (which in translation is available from Northwestern Publish

House), as well as many other works. He wrote many hymns (none of which have been translated into English), but the only one in modern German hymnals is “Ich grüße dich am

Kreuzenstamm” (“Hail to Thee Thou On The Cross”).

Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos (13 February). Aquila and his wife Priscilla (Prisca) were Jewish contemporaries of Saint Paul. They traveled widely, perhaps in part for business reasons but later certainly because of unrest and persecution in Rome. They went to Corinth and met the apostle, who joined them for a time in the tent-making trade (Acts 18,1-3).

Priscilla and Aquila, in turn, teamed with Paul in his mission of proclaiming the Christian Gospel. The couple later traveled with him from Corinth to Ephesus (Acts 18,18), where the two of them established a home that served as hospitality headquarters for new converts to Christianity.

Apollos, an eloquent man, was one of their numerous



A Modern Icon of Priscilla and Aquila

Jewish pupils in the faith: “Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus” (Acts 18,25). Apollos later traveled from Corinth to the province of Achaia, where he showed “by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18,28). Later accounts have Aquila being made a bishop in Asia; he was accompanied by Priscilla and they both were martyred by pagans.

St. Jerome wrote that Apollos retired to Crete but later returned and became the bishop of Ephesus.

We especially remember these three for their great missionary zeal. (Source: mainly from Aardvark Alley Blog)

READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD
APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION
ARTICLE V. LOVE AND FULFILLING THE LAW

It would be foolish to imagine that works of the Second Table (in which we interact with humans and not with God) justify us. In justification we interact with God. His wrath must be appeased and conscience must be eased about God. None of these happen by the works of the Second Table.

But [our critics] object that love is preferred to faith and hope. For Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13,13, "The greatest of these is love." It is reasonable that the greatest virtue should justify. Yet Paul, in this passage, properly speaks about love toward one's neighbor and indicates that love is the greatest, because it has the most fruit. Faith and hope have to do only with God. But love has infinite offices outwardly toward humanity. Indeed, let us grant to the adversaries that love toward God and our neighbor is the greatest virtue, because the chief commandment is this: "You shall love



the Lord your God" (Matthew 22,37). But how will they conclude from this that love justifies? They say, "The greatest virtue justifies." By no means! For just as the greatest, or first, Law does not justify, so also the Law's greatest virtue does not justify. But the virtue that justifies receives Christ, which brings to us Christ's merits, by which we receive grace and peace from God. This virtue is faith. Faith is not just

knowledge. It is willing to receive those things offered in the promise about Christ. (paragraphs 103–106) [Condensed from CONCORDIA: THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS, © 2006 by Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. All rights reserved]

Ash Wednesday – From ancient times, Ash Wednesday has marked the first day of Lent. There are forty days from Ash Wednesday until Easter. Sundays are not counted because the



Sundays in Lent are not fast days; rather, each is a celebration of the Resurrection. The forty days of Lent are reminiscent of the forty days in which rain fell during the Flood, our Lord's forty days and Israel's forty years in the wilderness, Christ's forty hours in the tomb, and related periods of judgment, testing, and completion of divine activities. The Gospel readings of Lent focus on the temptation and trials that Christ underwent on his way to His suffering and crucifixion.

Many people observe Lent by fasting. This can take place in many ways: Physically, we may deny ourselves various foods and pleasures; liturgically, we may omit parts of the Divine Liturgy, such as Alleluias and songs of praise. The Fast increases in depth and seriousness as we move from Ash Wednesday to Holy Week. During the Sundays following Ash Wednesday, we follow our Savior as He puts Himself "in harm's way" and prepares for His passion and death. As we continue through the Church Calendar, it is then during Holy Week that we fully focus on His suffering and death.

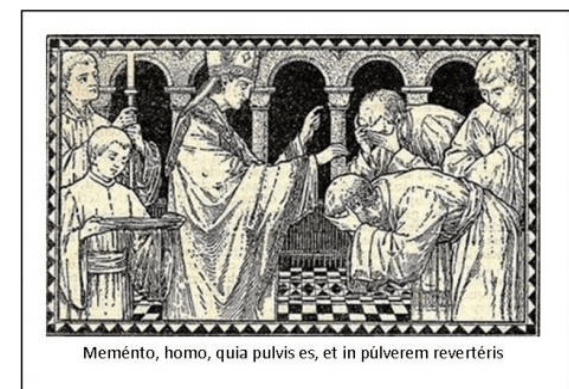


Along with fasting, two other traditional activities of the early Church remain part of many people's Lenten observance. These are increased prayer and almsgiving. All three of these are mentioned together in the Sermon on the Mount.

Ash Wednesday receives its name from the ancient custom of rubbing oneself in ashes during a fast or period of penance as a sign of humility and sorrow. In Scripture, we observe this happening among people as varied as Job, the king of Nineveh and the rest of the city, Daniel, and Mordecai.

These days, most believers don't cover themselves in burlap and ashes; the ashes are placed on the foreheads of believers as their pastor says, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." The ashes remind us that we still daily sin and that all our grand and glorious deeds are nothing in God's sight. This is especially illustrated when the

ashes are taken from the burning of the previous year's branches used on Palm Sunday. The praises of the people, their "Hosanna to the Son of David" and



"Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord," have fallen silent and are consigned to the burn pile of good

intentions not followed through.

However we observe Lent, we must take care to not assume a false piety by focusing on self. The believer keeps Lent extra nos (outside of self), following the lead of Hebrews 12,2 and "looking to Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Yes, Lent is a time of reflection and repentance. However, it's not intended to keep us looking within. Instead, upon viewing our sins, we then focus on the One Who takes them away. (Source: Aardvark Alley Blog)

A Question to Ponder on "Super Bowl Sunday": Does God care Who Wins the Super Bowl? By Bob Smietana (FEBRUARY 3, 2016)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — An old gospel hymn says God's eye is on the sparrow, but what about panthers and broncos? Not the ones from Carolina and Denver matched up for the National Football League's Super Bowl 50, according to a new survey from LifeWay Research.

The poll found most Americans are skeptical about divine intervention on the football field. They say God doesn't determine who wins or loses. And most believe God has bigger things to be concerned about.

"The Bible says God sets up and takes down nations and rulers," said Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research. "Either Americans do not agree, or they think God focuses on political leaders rather than cultural sports icons."

The phone survey of 1,000 Americans found almost 9

out of 10 (85 percent) say “no” when asked, “Does God determine winners and losers in the Super Bowl?” About 1 in 10 (11 percent) says “yes.” One in 25 (4 percent) doesn’t know.

Americans who identify as evangelicals (15 percent), as members of a non-Christian faith (18 percent), or as attending a religious service at least once a week (13 percent) are more likely to say God determines the Super Bowl winner. So are those with graduate degrees (15 percent).

In popular culture, God gets some credit for two of the most well-known plays in NFL playoff history: the 1975 “Hail Mary” pass from Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach to Drew Pearson and the “Immaculate Reception” caught by Pittsburgh Steelers’ fullback Franco Harris in 1972.

Still, most Americans don’t believe God cares about the outcome of the big game.

Nine out of 10 (88 percent) say “no” when asked, “Does God care who wins the Super Bowl?” Almost 1 in 10 (8 percent) says “yes.” One in 20 doesn’t know (5 percent).

Christians (89 percent) are more likely to say God doesn’t care about the Super Bowl winner than those of other faiths (79 percent). Those with some college (91 percent) are more skeptical than those with graduate degrees (81 percent). Americans who attend a religious service at least once a week (10 percent) are more likely to say God cares than those who attend once or twice a month (3 percent).

Those with evangelical beliefs (83 percent) are less likely to answer no when asked if God cares about the Super Bowl winner than other Americans (90 percent). They are also more likely to be unsure (7 percent) than other Americans (3

percent).

Americans remain devoted to pro football—especially the Super Bowl. Last year, a reported 114 million Americans tuned in to watch the Seattle Seahawks take on the New England Patriots.



Does God care who wins? Is this a trick question?

And while faith and football sometimes go together—NFL players often form prayer circles after the game ends—few fans admit seeking

divine aid for their teams. A 2014 LifeWay Research survey found only about 1 in 8 Americans (13 percent) say they have prayed for a sports team.

“Our previous research has shown most Americans think God is concerned with their day-to-day decisions,” said McConnell. “Yet this survey shows Americans do not see God as interested in their favorite sport.”

Bob Smietana is senior writer for Facts & Trends magazine.