

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

MAY – JUNE 2006

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **“GO IN PEACE”**
ALC Youth Leadership Retreat
- **“COME UNTO ME”**
Augsburg Annual Gathering
July 16-19, 2006
Galena, OH
- **“LUTHER ON WORSHIP”**
Lutheran Lay Academy Event
September 11-12, 2006
Fontanelle, Iowa

Heart Ranch – Davis Mountains, TX

Praise the Lord—what a gracious God we have! He forgives our sins, reconciles us to himself and gives us true fellowship with each other through his Son, Jesus Christ.

We were blessed beyond our imagination and expectations once again this year as we gathered to hear God’s Word and receive Christ’s Body and Blood in the foothills of the Davis Mountains. One youth was baptized in the pool at Balmohrea State Park on June 9, as we lived out “being” Christ’s community of faith!

The focus of the retreat this year was the power and new life Christ gives his church through his precious gifts of confession and absolution. We began with Luther’s Small Catechism:

What is the Office of the Keys?

It is that authority which Christ gave to his church to forgive the sins of those who repent and to declare to those who do not repent that their sins are not forgiven.

In the proclamation of his gospel, Christ breaks into a world where people deny their sin and blame others for their own mistakes, boldly declaring: “Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.”

Go In Peace



Now, this is *good news!* It is the gospel that sets you free from sin, death, the devil, and your own sinful self. It is the gospel that sets you free from trying to do it “my way” — it breaks you free from the chains of sin and death with the bold declaration that Christ was victorious on the cross *for you!*

You don’t have to “be at war” with your neighbor, or scapegoat innocent people, or go around caught up in a lie—feeling angry and guilty all the time. In Christ, it is finished. It is over. You are forgiven for Christ’s sake, and you are set free to forgive others in His Name.

On Thursday we reviewed Christ’s gift of forgiveness of sin and took a “Tour of Forgiveness” around the ranch on six-wheelers. As one youth pointed out, sometimes it isn’t easy for us to forgive someone who hurt us, and sometimes “we don’t feel like forgiving” them!

The mission of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches is to bear witness to the good news that sinners are put right with God by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. We resist any corruption of this Gospel. Looking to the cross of Christ, we proclaim God’s Word as Law and Gospel for the redemption of his people today. May God help us to the glory of his holy name. Amen.



FROM THE AUGSBURG PASTOR

JOHN EMERSON

Plans Solidify for "All Things New" in Albuquerque, 10/1-4

The Sixth Annual Gathering of LCMC is being held at Faith Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico from the 1st through the 4th of October. Information on the event can be found at the LCMC website (www.lcmc.net). Registration will begin Sunday afternoon, followed by dinner, worship and a fellowship dessert at Faith Lutheran Church, our host congregation. Rev. Bruce Wilder, Senior Pastor at Faith, will preach at the opening worship service on Sunday evening at 7:00 pm.



ORTBERG AND ESTRADA TO KEYNOTE

Monday afternoon will feature a keynote address by Rev. John Ortberg, internationally known Christian author and the teaching pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California. Pastor Ortberg will take part in a question and answer session following his presentation. Monday evening will provide opportunity for LCMC districts to gather at popular restaurants in the Albuquerque area for food, fellowship and networking.

Rev. Enrique Estrada from Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church, an LCMC congregation in Monterrey, Mexico is on deck as Tuesday morning's keynote speaker. "Fresh winds from the Spirit are coming our way. They are winds of hope, growth and excitement. God is on the move now for Monterrey and for Mexico," says Pastor Estrada, who will share that enthusiasm with the gathering.

Continued from page 1 — **GO IN PEACE** — the Third Annual ALC Youth Leadership Retreat



The Tour of Forgiveness outlined how we can begin forgiving and rebuild our broken relationships through the gifts of confession and absolution.

Thursday concluded with worship featuring the Holman family band.

On Friday, we focused on private confession and the Lutheran teaching and practice of partaking in private confession and absolution before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. After a trip to Balmorhea State

Park, with a full-emersion baptism in the artesian well fed pool, we concluded back at the camp with a lesson on atonement and the Service of Forgiveness.

Throughout the retreat, youth gathered for fellowship around the bonfire, the pickup truck (yes, we're in Texas, the pickup is a preaching point!), and under the big tent for Christian music with the Holman family band.

The retreat concluded on Sunday morning with a worship service that

declared the message of forgiveness loud and clear. "Christ comes to you today to be *your Savior*, forgive *your sins*, and *make you his own* for ever and ever. It is finished. Go in Christ's peace!"

Thanks to the whole crew who made this event possible, especially Dubb and Norma Duff, and their sons, who graciously hosted the retreat at the Heart Ranch again this year.

The 4th ALC Youth Leadership Retreat will be held June 6-10, 2007.

FROM THE AUGSBURG EXECUTIVE CHAIR LENAE RASMUSSEN



A SIMPLE MISSION

A Formidable Task

It is amazing how the church has a tendency to forget how simple the proclamation of Salvation is. Jesus was focused upon His calling by the Father to die in the stead of sinful humans. Yet He was compassionate in His daily living and reached out to the lost and hurting.

Our mission is no different. We have been given power by the Holy Spirit to proclaim that 'life-giving' message to the same lost souls. The Augsburg Lutheran Churches will remain steadfast as the world tries to change the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a 'palatable' faith without regard to sin or the truth of the Scriptures.

Augsburg Lutheran Churches have gathered together so we may become more effective in our ministries to our communities and support each other to further the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We would love to see you become a part of Christ's mission with us!

THE BODY OF CHRIST

A Caring Community

I Peter 1.3-6: " ³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

Augsburg Lutheran Churches are here to support you in your time of need. We are available to answer any questions you may have. We are in the business of proclaiming Christ's gospel of Salvation, educating and training pastors and laity, and starting new mission churches. But we are also here to help our brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties in their present situation. Please feel free to contact one of us at:

641-745-7090

Rev. John Emerson
salvage1@mddc.com

641-347-5398

Mrs. Dorothy McNaught

432-362-2549

Rev. Michael Mueller

910-916-9130

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910-245-7099

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lcarasmussen@earthlink.net



Please pray for our military and all those deployed around the world who stand guard to keep us safe and protect our liberty.

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one."

John 17:11b

EACH ONE REACH ONE

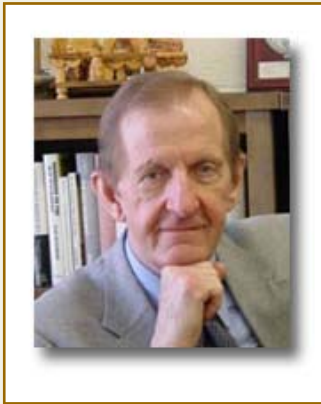


Augsburg Lutheran Churches Annual Gathering July 16 - 19, 2006

"COME UNTO ME"

MONDAY

Dr. Harry Wendt



Crossways International

TUESDAY



Rev. Tim Swenson

WEDNESDAY

Mr. Lou Hesse



Lou's "Top Eleven" —
"A Clear Eye From the Pigsty"

Opening Worship: 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 16

Monday and Tuesday Workshops:

**Crossways International
"Satellite Theological Seminary"**

**The Christian Challenge Today
Augsburg Lutheran Lay Academy**

Living Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
7539 Dustin Road • Galena, OH 43021
"just north of Columbus, Ohio"

For driving instructions and more information about Living Word go to
www.livingwordlutheranchurch.org

You can register online at: www.augsburgchurches.org

ALC NEWS, REPORTS AND EVENTS

I BELIEVE!



The third "preaching point" of the youth leadership retreat!

The Fourth Annual **ALC Youth Leadership Retreat** will be held **June 6-10, 2007**, at the Heart Ranch. The theme for this retreat is "I Believe!"

The 2007 retreat launches a three-year focus on the Creed with the First Article, "I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

Save the dates and start making plans to attend the next ALC youth gathering in West Texas.

October 9 - 10, 2006

ALC Fall Theological Conference & Clergy Retreat

Old Sanctuary in Brookings, SD

Dick Smith and John Emerson are making plans for another dynamic gathering for theologians of the cross this fall. Call (605) 692-3111 to reserve a room at the **Staurolite Motel** in Brookings.

Say "Augsburg" to get the group rate of \$45 per night.

September 11 - 12, 2006

Lutheran Lay Academy Seminar "LUTHER ON WORSHIP"

Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fontanelle, IA

Augsburg Lutheran Theological Seminary is holding an open seminar on worship September 11-12, 2006, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fontanelle, IA.

The seminar begins at 9:00 a.m. on Monday and concludes with worship at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday. More information and registration forms are available on the website: www.augsburgchurches.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 16 - 19, 2006 — **COME UNTO ME**, the 6th Annual Augsburg Gathering at Living Word Evangelical Lutheran Church - Galena, OH (*just north of Columbus, Ohio*).

September 11 - 12, 2006 — **LUTHER ON WORSHIP**, Augsburg Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) Lutheran Lay Academy Seminar — Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Fontanelle, IA (*40 miles east of Des Moines, IA*)

October 9 - 10, 2006 — **ALC Fall Theological Conference & Clergy Retreat** at the Old Sanctuary in Brookings, SD.

June 6 - 10, 2007 — **I BELIEVE!**, the ALC Youth Leadership Retreat in the Davis Mountains of West Texas.

ALC NEWS, REPORTS AND EVENTS

Thought for the Day

Rev. Dick Smith

The Day of Pentecost, June 4, 2006

2nd Reading: Romans 8:22-27

June 4th is the 50th day from Easter Sunday. This was the day that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples as they were in wait in Jerusalem following our Lord's Ascension in Heaven.

Jesus had promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit and this was the day. Unlike the Old Testament times when the Holy Spirit was poured out selectively upon certain individuals such as some kings, prophets, and priests, now the promise of Joel (2:28-32) was to be fulfilled. As quoted by Peter in his famous Pentecost Sermon, Joel begins: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:17a RSV).

"Upon all flesh" is a revolutionary change from what was. For it is the Holy Spirit who interprets the presence of Christ in each one of us which, in itself, is a remarkable new reality. On the heels of the crucifixion, death, and burial in which we are united with Christ through our water baptism, Christ is raised from the dead and we are given new life in HIM (Romans 6:3-4). That is, he now lives in us as our new life. The Spirit interprets that life in Christ in us.

Since we have died with Christ we "live no more" as St. Paul writes in Galatians 2:19-20. This affects EVERYTHING about our existence. As Paul points out in this reading from Romans 8, even prayer itself is to be no longer thought of as "our doing" but was the work of the Holy Spirit. Further the Spirit does not negotiate with man or woman in their heart but rather works both ends. Responding is also a work of the Spirit.

But Paul puts it so eloquently in this passage when he writes, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men (note he does not find in the hearts of men something natural to relate to or negotiate with, rather,) knows the

mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. "He who searches the hearts of men" meets up with The Holy Spirit therein, for Paul continues, (He) "knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Talk about the Holy Spirit is one thing. Total dependence upon the Holy Spirit is something else. Death in Baptism and new life in Christ means nothing less than total dependence upon the Holy Spirit. And that is what you have, my friend, in Christ.

It's not about "feeling something," though you might "feel something;" it's not about "experiencing something," though you might be one who "experiences something;" these can be illusive and fleeting passing moments. What it's about is your baptism. That is an event outside of your control. It is in God's hands not yours. Therefore it is not subject to human frailty and corruption. It is the foundation for the new life.

Luther wrote in the Small Catechism, Part IV: Baptism, that everyday we should drown the old self so that the new life may rise: Christ, our life. To look in the mirror each morning as we men shave or you girls put on your makeup, we can say in effect, what I see is not what I may think. Rather it is Christ who lives here. Luther then goes on to quote a portion from Romans 6, the heart of Paul's theology.

There Paul wrote, "Do you not know that ALL of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore by baptism into his death that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father we too might walk in a new life" (Romans 6:3-4).

The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to himself but rather turns attention to Christ and our life in him. "... the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27b). And a saint you are in Christ!

"...the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God"

Rom 6:3-4

ALC NEWS, REPORTS AND EVENTS

Memorial Day Tribute

Please stop for a moment and say a prayer for our service members and give thanks for all who have served our country.



ALC Churches Looking For Pastors

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church El Paso, Texas

Full time pastor for beautiful 95-year old church that supports the principles of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches and LCMC. Members are looking for leadership in increasing our membership and a pastor who preaches the word of God. We welcome all people.

Contact our Call Committee Chair, Mrs. Georgia DeKoatz, by telephone at (915) 581-0207, by fax at (915) 581-3628, or by Email at dekoatz@sbcglobal.net

6th Annual Augsburg Gathering

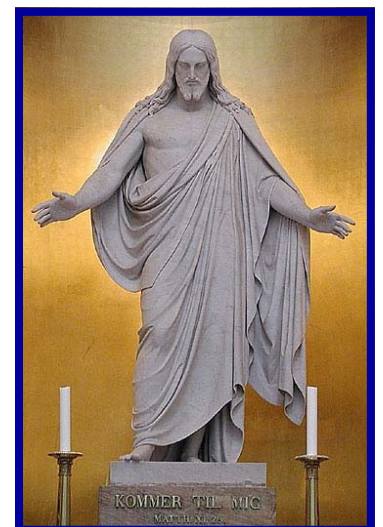
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**THE CROSS ALONE
IS OUR THEOLOGY**

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

VIEWPOINT

Page 8

The Duck & the Devil

submitted by John Howe

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner. As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck. Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was shocked and grieved. In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen." Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help." She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, he finally couldn't stand it any longer. He came to Grandma and confessed that he had killed the duck. Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Thought for the day and every day thereafter – Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done... and the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, cheating, debt, fear, bad habits, hatred, anger, bitterness, etc.) ... whatever it is ... You need to know that God was standing at the window and He saw the whole thing ... He has seen your whole life. He wants you to know that He loves you and that you are forgiven. He's just wondering how long you will let the devil make a slave of you. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness, He not only forgives you, He forgets! It is by God's grace and mercy that we are saved. Go ahead and make the difference in someone's life today. Share this with a friend and always remember: God is at the window.

