

### *The Purpose of Pentecost*

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Pentecost came fifty days after the resurrection. Jesus kept his promise and sent the Holy Spirit to his Church. The record of that day is astounding. The disciples were empowered. They were filled with confidence. They did what seemed unimaginable less than two months prior.

The account of Pentecost is amazing. In Acts 2, Luke records what happened:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?" Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? . . . We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They had had too much wine.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who are in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.  
Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.  
I will show wonders in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
The sun will be turned to darkness

*Continued on page 7*

## *LWMS Golden West 2008 Rally was Beautiful*

*By Sonja Todd*

This year's Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) Golden West Circuit Spring rally was held at Beautiful Savior in Las Vegas, Nevada on Saturday April 19, 2008. My husband accompanied me and did most of the driving—about 6.5 hours including stops along the way. Beautiful Savior just 15 minutes from the Las Vegas strip where we stayed, and is a very nice facility completed last year with the parsonage on the church grounds.

We arrived at Beautiful Savior at 8:30 A.M. to register (\$5.00) and enjoyed a continental breakfast prepared by the ladies of Beautiful Savior before the rally began. Beautiful Savior's Pastor Guse opened with a devotion and the hymn "Lift High the Cross." Martha S. (President of Golden West Circuit) followed with a welcome and announcements. Pastor Pfeifer (Green Valley, Henderson, NV) led a Bible study based on 1Peter 1:3-9 "Awaiting Glory with a Loving Hope."

Mid-morning was Game Time. Roberta G. from Star of Bethlehem (Santa Maria) and Sophie K. from Zion (Torrance) introduced a fun game called "What's in your purse?" A slip of paper with an item printed on it was drawn from a hat, and each lady searched her purse for the item.

The first to show the item explained how it could be used to witness about our Savior—and received a prize. For example, I was first to find a "Swiss Army knife." I said Jesus was "pierced for our transgressions;" in addition, the Swiss cross on the knife made easy reference to Jesus. My prize was a tube of Bath & Body Vanilla body wash.

Roberta then announced that the Golden West Circuit is gathering reading glasses (those in drug stores) to send to Indonesia. We no longer send used prescription glasses because it takes too much time to identify their prescriptions. Instead, we are requesting new reading glasses (\$1.00 to \$3.00 a pair) with the prescription on the box which can be sent without delay. Please see me if you want to participate.

Our business meeting comprised reports from various LWMS officers from 11-Noon. Then an excellent hot lunch was served by the Ladies of Beautiful Savior. After lunch, Rev. Myrl Wagenknecht, retired, took the floor.

He spoke about various home mission efforts by WELS and related his experiences as part of the first group, in 1966, to use the program "Talk About the Savior" (TAS) for evangelizing in several different states.

Pastor Wagenknecht told some very interesting stories about the WELS mission program started in the late 60's with the rallying cry "Every State by Seventy-Eight." He emphasized that these were exciting times for WELS and its home mission efforts as he, many other pastors and even lay people, signed on to establish at least one congregation in every state by 1978, despite being told by nay-sayers it was not very realistic.

While the nay-sayers were right, today only two states are without WELS presence: Rhode Island and West Virginia. Pastor Wagenknecht closed with a plea to all to continue to be mission minded, and to heed the Lord's Great Commission to make disciples in all the world—including at home as well.

Shortly before the close of the meeting elections of new officers to the Golden West Circuit were concluded:

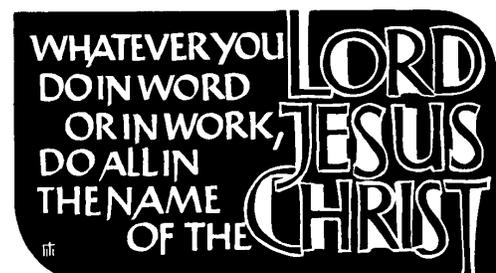
President – Linda H. (Star of Bethlehem, Santa Maria)  
 Vice President – Sonja T. (ORLC)  
 Secretary – Pam S. (ORLC)  
 Treasurer – Rosalie R. (Zion, Torrance)

There were 51 in attendance and together we donated \$605 for the Home Mission Field. The closing devotion was led by Pastor Pfeifer.

Upcoming LWMS events:

45<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, June 26–29, Tucson, AZ  
 Fall Rally, October 11, Victorville  
 Spring Rally, April 18, 2009,  
 Gethsemane, Santa Monica  
 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, June 2009, Colorado

Please plan to attend one of these events. As I have mentioned before, you won't be disappointed!



## The Mystery of True Life

By Carl Schueler

*“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.” - Romans 11:32*

*“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” - John 15:16a*

*“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” - Psalm 139:16*

*“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.” - Luke 20:38*

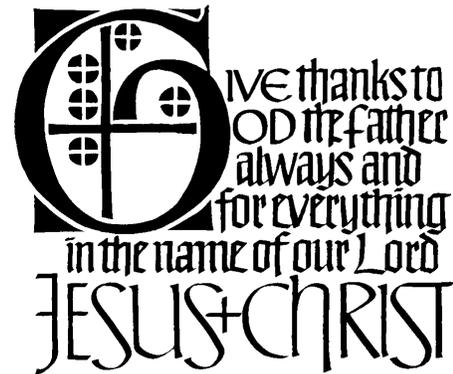
*“Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.” - Luke 12:5*

What is life? When does life begin? Is the soul immortal? These questions have daunted men since the beginning of time and will continue to vex philosophers and scientists to the end of the ages. Still, they are answered—at least in part—in the Bible. The series of five verses quoted above point to the reality of life: True life is an eternity in heaven, but without Christ there is no true life, but an eternity of suffering in hell.

Indeed, this “life” is but a shadow of the real life with Christ: “These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” Colossians 2:17 This verse, in the context of the “emptiness” of mindless religious rituals, reminds us that true life is in Christ.

First of all, God wants all to be saved and to be with him in Heaven as verified in Romans 11:32 above. Only by all being without merit to warrant life could all be given the gift of life through the meritorious work of the Savior. Accordingly, John 15:16 above records for us that Jesus reminded his disciples—including all believers—that they have been chosen through Grace, not by works—elected to “true life” by a forgiving God.

Then, in Psalm 139:16, we find life began for each of us believers in Eternity! Before conception, before creation, indeed before time itself: God knew each believer, when they would be born, how many days on earth, and when the believer would—Die? No! When the believer would be transformed, or transferred, from “this life” to



the next: to “true” life in Heaven!

In Luke 20:38 above, a reminder that God is the God only of those who are alive! It says “to him all are alive.” That doesn’t mean that all are alive, it means God only knows those who are “alive,” not those who are “not alive”—“to him all are alive” because those who are “not alive” he does not know! (“Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Matthew 7:23)

And who are those who are alive? Only those who breathe today? No! Sure, believers who breathe today—but many more who “died” but who are alive—in Heaven with Jesus! And, mercifully, some who breathe today but are not yet alive in Christ, but will be “born again” while in this life. And yet still more who have not been born, but will live for awhile in the world, and be raised to “true” life in heaven!

And who are those who are not alive? Only those who died? No! Sure, some who died and are not in Heaven—whom God does not know. But tragically also some who breathe today, but who will reject—to their graves—God’s gracious offer of salvation. These poor are physically alive, but spiritually “dead” in their sins. While they were ransomed by Christ’s sacrifice, they will be penalized in Hell without confidence in who Christ is and what he did. As noted in Luke 12:5 above, without Christ, physical death results not in the “end,” but the tragic beginning of an indescribably horrible eternity in hell.

The good news for the “walking dead” is that the Holy Spirit seeks them and wants to “raise” them to true life while in this life. How? Through the mystery of believers relating the Good News of Christ—simply telling the story—and pointing them to the Bible. Our duty and privilege! Praise the Lord!

## Book Review—*Prayer: An Audience with the King*

*Prayer: An Audience With The King*, by Joel Petermann  
(Northwestern Publishing House, 180 pp., \$13.99)

*Book Review by Alan Todd*

How is your prayer life? Would you like to improve it and make it more effective?

This book on prayer, part of the People's Bible Teaching series from Northwestern Publishing House, provides a very interesting perspective on prayer by reminding all of us that Jesus is the King (our Redeemer King) and we are his subjects. From this perspective, Pastor Petermann reminds us that prayer is our opportunity to come into the court of heaven and talk to the King of the universe!

Pastor Petermann breaks the book into 12 chapters around a basic outline:

- Who is this King?
- What is our status before this King?
- How and with what words is it proper to speak to this King?

Like all the books in this NPH series, Pastor Petermann's shows how prayer should be understood from the clear passages of scripture and how this applies to our faith and life.

As part of his research, Pastor Petermann sent out surveys to selected WELS members regarding every aspect of their prayer life including what posture they used when praying. The survey responses were used to compare how and where and how often we prayed to how and where and how often we prayed in the Bible.

As just one example, consider "What to do with your hands?" Pastor Petermann notes that a very common posture for prayer in the Bible was to "lift up hands with outstretched palms." This is something we in the WELS perhaps don't normally practice, yet a posture that makes a lot of sense when one considers that he is praying to the King of the universe who is also our Father and our Redeemer and who wants us to receive gifts from Him.

Other insights from Pastor Petermann include misconceptions about prayer, especially how some people expect God to speak to them directly while they are praying. We are reminded that we have no promise from God that he will talk to us directly in prayer or in any other way

apart from his Word in the Bible. Prayer is, however, our opportunity to talk to him after we have first listened to Him through his Word.

This is important because "once we know what his Word says, then we are ready to respond with our prayers and requests, asking him to help us in the very way he has told us he will." (Remember this the next time someone relates a non-Biblical imagined interaction with God, resulting in a statement such as: "God told me to quit my job and move." Nonsense!)

Other chapters on The Etiquette of Prayer, An Open Invitation from the King, and The Father-King Answers Prayer, among still more, provided similar valuable insights.

Prayer is an important part of our lives as God's people. This book will help you to appreciate more fully the privilege of an audience with the King.



### *An Illustration on Prayer*

"A good, active barber must keep his thoughts, mind, and eyes closely on the razor and the hair and must not forget where he is with his stroke and shave. But if he wants to gossip freely at the same time or let his thoughts or eyes go elsewhere, he may well cut off a man's mouth and nose and his throat besides. Thus every matter, if it is to be done well, calls for the attention of the whole person, with all his sense and members, as they say - He who thinks about many things thinks of nothing and does nothing that is good. How much more does prayer, if it is to be a good prayer, require a heart that is undistracted, entirely and solely give to its devotion!"

*What Luther Says, page 1086  
Paragraph 3468*

## Notes & News



Through the course of 2008 there are a number of activities planned that will give us the opportunity to invite our friends, neighbors and relatives to come and learn more about our faith in Jesus Christ. Some of the informa-

tion is still tentative, but the dates are set. So keep them open, and keep others informed.

### May 17th - Ladies Tea at 2:00 pm

Mrs. Ruth Schaller will be the featured speaker at the Fourth Annual Tea. Her presentation is "Hey, Lord, this path does not look at all familiar." This is a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to learn more about our congregation, its people and its message. Please speak to Sonja T. or Debbie A. for more information.

### Family Night at the Movies — May 31st

Plans are falling into place regarding our family movie night. The activity will start with an afternoon matinee of "Prince Caspian." Once the theater is located, we will meet there at the designated time. After the movie we will return to the fellowship hall for pizza, salad and dessert. Make sure you talk up this great activity with your friends and their families.

### 4th of July Barbeque and Fireworks

This is always an enjoyable afternoon and evening of friendship and good food. As in the past we will start the afternoon with a short movie. The movie will consider an important topic at the founding of our country, and it remains a timely topic today -

*"The Role of Pastors and Christians in Civil Government."*

Then we will dig in to the traditional tri-tip dinner. The evening comes to a close at Girsh Park for fireworks. This is a great opportunity to invite friends. Starting planning today!

### Festival of Friendship—September 7th

It is not too early to start thinking about this special outdoor service and tri-tip barbeque. Remember the service starts at 10:30 am.

## Schedule for May

### *Handbell Choir*

Practice continues on Monday nights. Preparations are being made for Pentecost, Trinity, and Memorial Day. If you have thought about playing, come to a practice. Then, next year come and join.

### *Choir*

The choir meets Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm and usually practices about an hour. If you would like to sing praises to the Lord, just come! You may speak to Pastor Proeber for more information.

### *Wednesday Bible Study*

At 7:00 pm we gather to study Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. This is a rich epistle that has Paul recalling his ministry in Corinth, and offering the Christians encouragement in their challenges. For the next few weeks, we will follow the schedule:

#### Retrospect: Paul's Authority and Ministry in Corinth

- A. Ministry under the God of all Comfort
- B. Ministry of Divine Triumph
- C. Ministry Commended by Christ
- D. Ministry of the New Covenant
- E. Ministry of Imparting the Life of Jesus
- F. Ministry of Reconciliation
- G. Ministry of God's Exclusive Appeal
- H. Ministry Aided by Titus' Report

### *Sunday Morning*

The Sunday morning class is picking up speed as it focuses on the Lord's Prayer. As an aid for the study we will be using Luther's Large Catechism. In each of his explanations Luther's offers rich insights, as well as intriguing observations. Come and learn more about this precious prayer given us to by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Topics for study will be:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| May 11th | Hallowed be Your Name                            |
| May 18th | Your Kingdom Come                                |
| May 25th | Your Will be done on Earth as it is<br>in heaven |
| June 1st | Give Us This Day our Daily Bread                 |

# Notes & News

## Board of Trustees Report

This past week the Trustees have been busy make improvements to our property and buildings. Yesterday there was a work day, and it was well attended. Eight men came on Saturday and one came on Thursday. Between the two days a fair amount was accomplished.

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| Spraying weeds   | Trimming oaks |
| Resetting bricks | Trenching     |
| Trim avocados    | Weeding       |

There is still more work that can be done. If you have some free time during the week, plan to stop by. An hour or two can make a big difference.

The Trustees also made some renovations in the fellowship hall. In order to accommodate more seating, part of the wall was taken down. Everything was completed this past Wednesday.

Plans are also underway for expanding the tractor shed. Al T. and Dave V. have been drawing prints and working with the County. More information will follow next month.

**Reporter's Wanted!**  
 Book review?  
 Personal Story of Faith?  
 Event Reports? (Potluck, gathering, party, field trip?)

Half-page to three pages  
 Reviewed for scriptural consistency and readability  
 by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl S., or email to Carl S.  
 (cfs\_home@cox.net) & Pastor Proeber  
 (pastor@orlcsb.net)

***A simple and rewarding way to serve!***

Thanks to Alan T. for a book review and short Bible lesson, and to Sonja T. for the LWMS Rally review in this month's newsletter. *The Reporter* continues to benefit from a variety of perspectives, and this issue is a continuing series with articles by volunteer "reporters."

The open invitation early last year to provide material the *Reporter* resulted in a fine response. Nine members authored some 35 articles in 2007 which really "made" the 2007 volume. These included articles on a wide variety of subjects: ORLC news, past and planned events, thought-provoking instructional articles on WELS history and other religions, and articles relating to personal perspectives on our faith in Jesus.

We pray that more members will continue to think about possible articles for 2008. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl S. for advice. Thanks!

### Meetings for May 2008

Outreach	May	3rd	at 9:30 am
Church Council	May	6th	at 7:00 pm
Board of Education	May	13th	at 7:00 pm
Board of Elders	May	20th	at 7:00 pm
Board of Trustees	May	27th	at 7:00 pm



We rejoice in the many blessings given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly with everything they need, and with the strength and faith to be a blessing to others.

- 9<sup>th</sup> - Caroline R.
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Kelsey G.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - Wilma H.
- 27<sup>th</sup> - Josh S.
- 29<sup>th</sup> - Dale K.
- Tom W.

# May 2007

and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.  
And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the others apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

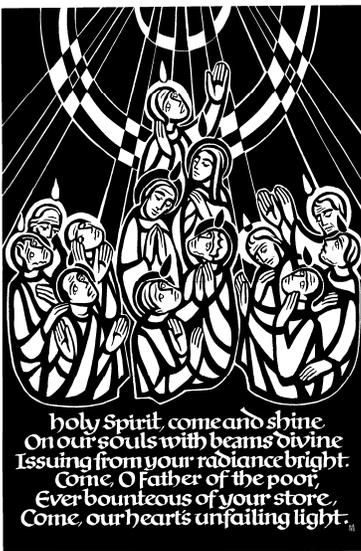
Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

It is amazing to look at the results of that day. Even more important, the message of the gospel went into the whole world with the people who came to faith. If you took a map and placed dots where the people went after Pentecost, it is simply miraculous what God accomplished. In one day, the Lord began the process of fulfilling the “great commission” (Matthew 28:16-20).

What about today? How do we understand and view Pentecost? It is 50 days since we celebrated the resurrection of our Savior. Does it seem like a distant memory? Have we moved on to more important matters? Do we still enjoy the burning in our hearts caused by our triumphant and living Savior?

Honestly, it is a challenge. To keep the fire of Easter burning brightly requires time and effort. This is why the Lord promised the Holy Spirit. Pentecost creates a special link between Easter and every day life. It provides the spark that reignites our joy.



On the day of Pentecost we sing hymns and hear lessons that show our Savior kept his promise. We even learn what is ours because the Holy Spirit came. All reveal the purpose of Pentecost remains the same. It was the day when our Savior unleashed the power of the Gospel, and sent his Church into the world to proclaim it. Near and far, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, it didn't make any difference. God's people shared the message with earnestness and enthusiasm. What is even more amazing is that when Satan sought to silence the message through persecution and loss, Christ's Church increased its efforts. This was Pentecost at work.

2,000 years later we are the recipients of Pentecost. Our Savior's promise to send the Spirit stands true, and just as amazing the Spirit still works in and through God's people. Everything remains the same, except maybe you and me. I think it would be safe to say the purpose of Pentecost is not as significant today. We fill our schedule with responsibilities. We make ourselves busy at home, work, and even at church. At the end of the day, we're tired. Then, what do we have to show for all our energy and effort? Has the cause of Christ's Church been furthered. Has a soul received the life giving message of forgiveness in Christ? It makes us think.

It is easy to relegate Pentecost to a “ho-hum” celebration. Certainly it doesn't command the attention Easter does. Still, where would we be without Pentecost? The church and the apostles might have remained in Jerusalem. They might have limped along with only modest gains. Quite possibly, the church might have died out by the 2nd Century.

At Pentecost, Jesus super-charged his church and his people. We are recipients of that same heritage and blessing. We are also recipients of the same Spirit. We need to cherish what is ours. This will move us forward with boldness and confidence. It will open our eyes to see opportunities. It will loosen our tongues to proclaim the greatness of our Savior. Pentecost was a great day in the life of Christ's Church. We need to make it a great part of our life today.

# CORNER ☩

## DEVOTIONAL



**John 17:1** - “After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed.”

### “Jesus Prayed”

Jesus knew what was ahead of him. He was well aware of the path God the Father had prescribed. It included betrayal, capture, mockery, shame, crucifixion and death. He also knew he would be hounded by his enemy who sought his failure. Because he knew what was ahead of him, Jesus prayed.

It is important to understand the nature of that prayer. He prayed so that his Father’s name would be glorified (John 17:1). He prayed that eternal life might be secured for all people (John 17:2). He prayed for faithfulness to complete his work (John 17:4).

Jesus’ prayer as he approached his death is a good pattern for me to follow. As I examine my prayer-life, it is clear I often approach prayer as a “fire extinguisher.” I know I can pray. I know prayer will help. Unfortunately, I allow my prayers to “hang on the wall” until I have a real emergency. Too often I try to approach my life on my own terms and with my own abilities. Then, when I see the situation go from bad to worse, or beyond my control, I frantically look to the Lord. It is safe to say I tend to consider prayer as a “last resort.”

Jesus teaches me a different pattern, a better pattern. Instead of waiting for an emergency, my use of prayer is part of my daily routine. Rising in the morning, undertaking the activities of the day, appreciating blessings, asking for faithfulness, and rejoicing in the Lord’s underserved love throughout the day – these are all opportunities to come to the Lord in prayer.

It all starts with believing the Lord works through prayer. Here is where I need to recognize the greater work Jesus accomplished. With his faithfulness to his Father’s will, he restores my faithfulness. With his death on the cross, he removes every obstacle that prevents my prayers from reaching heaven. With his victory over the devil, he enables me to approach God the Father as a child approaches a loving parent. Jesus alone makes it possible for me to come with boldness and confidence. Jesus alone provides me the assurance I will be heard. Jesus alone gives me the peace to know every answer will be for my blessing.

Jesus prayed, because he trusted in his Father’s promise to hear and answer him. Through Jesus, I too can pray, and I can trust my Father’s promise to hear and answer me.

### Prayer Thoughts

Dearest Jesus, as you approached your Father confidently in prayer, so teach me to pray. Amen!

Daily devotions can be accessed through [www.whataboutjesus.com](http://www.whataboutjesus.com) or [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net). Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as “podcasts.”