

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

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Happy Anniversary!

Maybe not. It's been two years since we left the Missouri Synod and became an independent congregation. So, have you noticed? Was life harder? Was church different? The world as we knew was ended more by Covid than it was by leaving a synod.

Time is marching on, and we're not standing still. We have set in motion hosting a series of speakers. These are Confessional Lutheran pastors who left various synods at various times to become independent. They may be now in associations or alliances, but they are not in synods. The first invite has gone out and it's been accepted by Rev. Michael Albrecht for Sunday, September 12th.

These will be right after the Sunday Divine Service. We plan on having a light lunch and then our speaker will give a presentation for about an hour with no more than an hour for questions. Neither I, the Board of Elders, nor the Voters Assembly have a preconceived idea of where this will lead us. Right now, in addition to Covid causing much upheaval, conservative Christianity in general is facing many challenges. There is unease in the church catholic.

Well, there is a malaise in and over the general public. This is the time for the Body of Christ to shine, not walk around like the couple going to Emmaus: unsure of the resurrection, of Jesus, of the future of the Holy Christian Church.

Read Augustine's *City of God*. It was written while the Roman Empire was in its final death throes. All earthly empires die you know. Even democracies. Even ones upon whom "God shed His grace." Rome was declining, failing, falling, ending, and the Christians were being blamed. When Rome burned circa 60 A.D., the Christians were blamed then, too.

I fully expect as the OT Church was blamed for what happened in Egypt as the NT Church was blamed for what happened in Rome, we, conservative Christians who refuse to bow before the various movements, conventional wisdom, and accepted immorality, will be blamed.

To this we say, "Bring it on." Our Lord told us to expect many tribulations, to be hated even as He was, to be rejected even as He was, to be crucified even as He was. Even if everything that is going on right now is an indication of the very end of the world itself, our response would still be to lift up our heads.

Jesus laid it out for us in Luke 21:25-26 and verse 28. He says, "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Then Jesus tells us what our response can be: "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Even if this isn't the end of the world, but merely more birth pangs (Matthew 24:8: "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs."), lifting up our heads is still perfectly appropriate. The only thing we are ever called to despair of is ourselves, other sinners, and the ways and thoughts of men. Never of our Lord and His promises. We don't know how the Lord will deliver us. We only know that He will.

It's a thorny problem to us. We have a world, a nation, a people that is begging for the judgment of God for their unbelief and other great shame and vice, but we're in the midst of them. 2 Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." We lift up our heads because rescue is on the way for us even as judgement is for those outside of Christ.

Elders' Meeting March 2, 2021 Notes

The elders met on May 4, 2021. We studied the introduction and first two articles of the Apology.

Trinity Speaker Series

Pastor Harris is communicating with several other pastors who we might invite to speak at Trinity on various topics. We have several goals for this speaker series:

1. To look for fellowship that may already exist between us and other congregations.
2. To learn about and discuss which issues might establish fellowship and which might divide it.
3. To hear about the experiences of other confessional congregations that have gone independent.
4. To hear from other confessional Lutherans in general.

Guest Pastor in June

Pastor will be on vacation on June 13 and 20. Pastor John Austin will be filling in. He is a retired pastor at Grace, Elgin.

Youth Group Garage Sale

We discussed this and decided to see if there are any volunteers to run a garage sale.

The Constitution does not have a spot for the Youth, although Sunday school is under the elders. Therefore, youth activities are ultimately the responsibility of the parents.

Other

We still hope to tour the Community First Village sometime.

Derek Kurth

**Historical abortion fiction
Pro-abortionists claim
abortifacients were legal centuries
ago. The historical record proves
otherwise**

by Marvin Olasky Post Date: January 14, 2021 - Issue Date:
January 30, 2021

The move toward swallowing abortion pills at home takes us back to an earlier era when abortion-seekers avoided surgical abortion, a risky proposition for women not only morally but physically, due to the great risk of infection. Abortifacients—potions designed to produce abortion—included oil of savin, ergot, rue, tansy oil, and wormwood, all of which caused a horrible shock to the entire body of the maternal user. Dosage was key, and effects could range all the way from a slightly upset stomach to death of child or death of mother and child.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun based his 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision more on erroneous history than the Constitution. Blackmun attempted to show that laws against abortion date from the 19th century, which means before that men could force women to swallow the potions without facing any legal penalty. Blackmun wrote, “It is undisputed that, at common law, abortion performed before ‘quickening’—the first recognizable movement of the fetus in utero, appearing usually from the 16th to the 18th week of pregnancy—was not an indictable offense.”

That’s just plain untrue. The secret use of abortifacients was hard to prosecute, but difficult is not the same as legal. Let’s go back to the 17th century and see what a forgotten but fascinating tale shows us about early America’s common law. The site: Charles County, Maryland, 35 miles southeast of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. The story starts in 1656, when Mary-Land (the original spelling of the colony founded in 1634) had about 8,000 residents, including an ardently pro-life woman, Elizabeth Claxton.

Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun based his 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision more on erroneous history than the Constitution. That year Claxton bravely swore that a landowner, Francis Brooke, beat his mistress (unnamed in court records) and made her drink wormwood. Brooke had an illustrious last name shared by a former governor of the colony and two centuries later the U.S. Supreme Court’s chief justice, Roger Brooke Taney, who presided over the *Dred Scott* case in 1857.

Unawed by Brooke’s influence, Claxton testified that she had approached him and “asked him if he longed to be hanged.” The evidence: Midwife Rose

Smith had delivered from the mistress a dead 4-inch unborn child, and testified that he “was a man Child about three months old.” It’s strange that Claxton would say such killing was a hanging offense if abortion of an unborn child less than 4-5 months old wasn’t a crime.

The case had an unusual conclusion: Brooke’s mistress said she wanted to marry him, despite what he had done to her and their child. Maybe she loved him, maybe she just wanted his money, but she knew from then on, that Brooke was a marked man and would have to treat her decently—or else suffer social isolation and legal punishment.

Brooke accepted the deal because he did not want to be hanged: His mistress, once married, would no longer testify against him, and midwife Smith could not swear that the unborn child’s death was not via a natural miscarriage. But word spread in the small Mary-Land community: One way to marry a wealthy landowner was to bring a claim of forced abortion.

That’s important because as the Brooke case was being decided, a middle-aged jack-of-all-trades arrived in Mary-Land. During the next decade Jacob (sometimes called John) Lumbrozo was a doctor, lawyer, planter, innkeeper, wolf-hunter, and somewhat of a wolf himself, according to court cases, of which there were many. He had been financially successful in Portugal and Amsterdam. He was also Jewish.

When Lumbrozo gave legal help to neighbor John Hammond, Hammond refused to pay what he owed and said (according to Lumbrozo), Let’s make a deal: You can have sex with my wife. Hammond denied that, sued Lumbrozo for defamation, and won the case against “ye Jew doctor.” Lumbrozo had to pay 5,000 pounds of tobacco, worth about \$10,000.

It wasn’t unusual for landowners to have sex with servants. In 1663 Lumbrozo employed Elizabeth Wieles, 22, a recently arrived immigrant from England. If her situation was typical, she headed across the Atlantic because few things had gone right for her at home. She was probably destitute and without parents or siblings who wanted her around.

Until abortion became common, the general prohibition on murder seemed sufficient. In one sense Mary-Land was a patriarchy, but Monica Witkowski threw new light on social relationships in her 2010 Marquette University dissertation, “‘Justice Without Partiality’: Women and the Law in Colonial Maryland, 1648-1715.” Witkowski wrote that the women she studied exhibited “a sophisticated

understanding of the legal workings of the colony. Many colonial women also understood how to manipulate the legal system to procure a more favorable outcome.”

IN THAT LIGHT I STUDIED Maryland archival records about what a neighbor of Wieles, George Harris, told a Charles County jury on June 29, 1663: He said Wieles had told him two weeks earlier that Lumbrozo “tooke her to bed and had layne with her whether shee woold or no, whearof before shee coold Consent to ly with him hee tooke a booke in his hand and swor many bitter oaths that hee woold marry me.” The book he allegedly swore on was probably a Bible.

Premarital sex was not unusual in many of the colonies. One advice manual for young women did not say “no sex before marriage.” It said do so if you wish, but only if you have a signed statement from the man pledging marriage. Wieles gave in before getting Lumbrozo’s word in writing. Then he backed away. The dispute may not have ended up well for Wieles—but, having probably learned about the Brooke precedent, she played an ace, telling fellow servants and others she had become pregnant and Lumbrozo had pushed her to abort.

Wieles supplied no evidence of that. While purportedly pregnant she told no one about it. No one ever saw an aborted child. In any event the child had not quickened: She told several people that after Lumbrozo gave her an abortifacient she expelled a blood clot. On June 27, even though no law specifically declared abortion to be an offense, Charles County jurors indicted Lumbrozo for a felony based on his servant’s “publick Confession tht she was with Child by Lumbrozo and that hee did give her phisick to destroy it.”

So much for the Justice Blackmun supposition that common law allowed abortion and that, at least before quickening, it was not an indictable offense. But let’s also bury the notion that the law was inhumane toward women. -Wieles still wanted what Lumbrozo had promised, marriage. She wanted it so badly that she apparently made a deal with her employer: She would say she had lied, and he would marry her.

She then told the jury: “What I have said Concerning Lumbrozo it is false, for hee left mee no such things which I reported.” That she “was with Child by the doctor and lay with him every night”: False. That Lumbrozo gave her an abortifacient: False.

The jurors were startled. They questioned a friend of Wieles, one Margaret Oles: What happened? Oles

When 1% is 100%

Posted on August 9, 2010 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

testified that Wieles had asked her advice on how to testify: “whether it was best for her to clear [Lumbrozo] or no.” Thus advised, Wieles pleaded with the jury that Lumbrozo “bee Cleare from the scandal that I rise upon him for what it was spoken I did Rise of mee owne head and further say not.”

Jurors could have indicted Wieles for perjury, but they preferred a happy ending. We know Lumbrozo married her within five months of the trial, because a bill of sale dated Nov. 16, 1663, identified her as Elizabeth Lumbrozo. The provincial court dropped the case. We still do not know if that abortion ever happened.

The good news is that the Lumbrozos must have gotten along, because Lumbrozo’s will dated Sept. 24, 1665, left almost everything (including thousands of pounds of “well-conditioned tobacco”) to Elizabeth Lumbrozo, “my Dearly beloved wife,” and made her his executrix. The following year Mrs. Lumbrozo gave birth to a son.

Lumbrozo noted in his will, “I bequeath my soul to God.” He also bequeathed his story to historians willing to pay attention. The common law, unwritten but understood, declared abortion even before quickening to be murder.

During the decades since 1973, many law professors from a variety of persuasions have decried Justice Blackmun’s legal reasoning yet left alone his faulty history. The importance of that history is evident in the way The New York Times repeatedly revisits it. Georgia State historian Lauren Thompson declared in a December 2019 column: “In the 17th and 18th centuries, abortion was legal under common law before ‘quickening.’ ... Abortion in the early stages of a pregnancy was common and generally not considered immoral or murderous.”

Similarly, Times columnist Nicholas Kristof stated in October 2020, “Abortion was legal in the United States up to the point of quickening (the fetal movements felt in the second trimester) until the 19th century.” He evidently does not understand that Americans knew a baby in the womb is human life, so until abortion became common, the general prohibition on murder seemed sufficient. Kristof and others should read the Archives of Maryland and the records of other colonies.

(https://world.wng.org/2021/01/historical_fiction)

No math wizard I. No math would be more accurate but riddle me this. When is 1% a 100%? When it matters the most.

The Pro-Life movement stands for babies in the womb. The Pro-Abortion movement doesn’t recognize babies as babies till they’re out of the womb. The Pro-Abortion crowd bangs the drum of pregnancy by rape or incest. The Pro-Life movement responds, “That’s only 1% of all abortions.” The Pro-Abortion movement counters. “Fine, then at least recognize abortion is morally right in those circumstances. Well pregnancies by rape and incest may be 1% of abortions, but it’s 100% of the argument. If the Pro-Life cause says it’s okay to kill those babies in the womb resulting from rape or incest, they have no moral basis for opposing someone else’s reason for killing a baby in utero.

The Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Churches can be read about here <http://acelc.net>. This is a group of LCMS congregations actually confessing what the LCMS supposedly stands for. There “A Fraternal Admonition to Correct the Errors of Our Beloved Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod” is on their website. I agree with much of what it says. There is a 1% I don’t because it is 100% of the argument.

Under the first section “Pure Doctrine,” the third point is this: “Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions uphold the Order of Creation as the framework within which both Church and home must function in order for the home and congregation to properly reflect Christ and His bride the Church. Today some in the LCMS insist that if the Synod wishes to remain faithful, we must reevaluate how we interpret God’s Word in its teaching that women not be allowed to exercise the office of the pastoral ministry. We reject the toleration of this error.” Under section 5 they also treat the Order of Creation. I agree with what they say in both places as far as it goes. But nota bene they say in neither place that the Order of Creation applies in the world. They don’t say it does not, but that seems to be the implication of saying that “the Order of Creation is the framework within which both Church and home must function.”

Buy This Book

The 33% left out is 100% of the argument against female pastors and women congregational leaders. Adam and Eve we're the first home, church and state. If you deny that the Order of Creation applies to the world, you have drawn an arbitrary line at the door of the home and the church. To be sure there are all sorts of challenges, responsibilities, and rethinking connected to returning to the LCMS' original position on the subject, but it won't do to go halfway or two-thirds way. If we're in for a penny, we're in for the whole pound.

The male-female relationship is a nucleus issue. Erwin Chargaff comments on two other nucleus issues showing that when these issues are tampered with they set off chain reactions of untold, unintended, and unimagined consequences. He says, "My life has been marked by two immense and fateful scientific discoveries: the splitting of the atom, the recognition of the chemistry of heredity and its subsequent manipulation. It is the mistreatment of a nucleus that, in both instances, lies at the basis: the nucleus of the atom, and the nucleus of the cell. In both instances do I have the feeling that science has transgressed a barrier that should have remained inviolate" (in Jerry D. Salyer, "Where the Demons Dwell: The Antichrist Right," *Chronicles*, August 2010, 20).

Three observations. 1) It is in the name of the social sciences that the nucleus of male-female has been tampered with. 2) It too involves a splitting of what God has joined together. 3) The real implications of discarding the order of creation can be seen in the ruling for same sex marriage. Judge Vaughn Walker, himself a homosexual by the way, said in part that the excluding same-sex couples from marriage "exists as an artifact of a time when the genders were seen as having distinct roles in society and in marriage... That time has passed" (*Austin American Statesman*, 8-7-10, Editorial, *The New York Times*, "Marriage is a constitutional right," A17).

In regard to the ACELC's admonition for the LCMS to do something now, I imagine the newly elected LCMS conservative administration pleading, "Give us a chance." I'd probably do the same, but I think the ACELC is to be applauded for offering a cure for what ails Missouri. Too often I am like C.S. Lewis said of one his detractors. I assert many diseases without advising any cures ("Rejoinder to Dr. Pittenger, *God in The Dock*, 183). I think there is real curative power in the stand this group is taking, but I'm nagged by that 1%.

In 1971 Abbie Hoffman's book titled *Steal This Book* was published. It was a call and guide to "fight against the man." When I came here in 1999, Gene Veith's *Spirituality of the Cross* was all the rage. This was the book to give to the non-Lutheran, particularly those coming from Reformed Christianity, to introduce them to Lutheranism.

After reading it, I did that, but I never got it. I didn't see what I regarded as the gems of true Lutheranism in this book. Most people I gave it to when finished were didn't rave about it; most seem nonplused. When someone I loaned it to never returned it before moving on, I never bothered to replace it.

I have had Harold Senkbeil's 1994 book, *Dying to Live*, probably almost as long as I had Veith's book. I recently read this book, and this book describes, conveys, wallows in the Lutheranism that I know as genuine, Confessional, and in spirit of Luther.

Here are just a view gems from this work. On the merits of Private Confession: The trouble with self-medicating with the Gospel is that we can see the sins of others, but we can't see our own. If we don't properly identify the sin, the sinner goes on living and getting stronger (86). On the miracle of the Real Presence: "Some things are too important to be left to the eyes. Sometimes simple eyesight can't take in all there is to see. ... Other people might see just another baby, we when we see our own flesh and blood, we see things you can't detect with simple lenses and retains – things like love and affection" (91). On discussing Contemporary Worship. "We'll never resolve issues revolving around the how of public worship until we tackle the what of public worship." Is it just another public assembly of like-minded people or is the worshipping congregation itself God's own creation called into being by God Himself (116)?

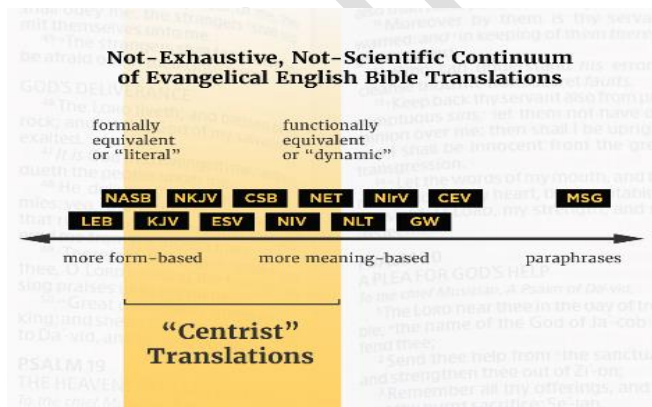
The following is my favorite and I've found 1 in a 100 lay people who understand why this should be so and needs to be so about your pastor. "The pastor who leads us in worship needs no introduction... For we have called him to be a spokesman for God to perform the sacred duties of God's holy ministry among us. Therefore, we have little interest in personal rapport with him" (127).

Envision using these gems to explain to someone liturgical worship. "The liturgy strikes some people as cold and impersonal, but that's because it is an

extraordinary situation. Ritual for its own sake is idolatry, but even secular society has certain revered rituals.... No one calls the soldiers of the honor guard [at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington]hypocrites because they act differently at those tombs than they would, say, at the beach or the movies. Solemn assembly calls for solemn actions. ..Our ears are so jaded by the discord of modern life that the harmonious texts of the ancient liturgy seem stilted. Our voices are so attuned to the music of this age that the liturgy's timeless music seems awkward.... Changing ever so slowly through the centuries, it has borrowed something from every culture it has touched, and yet it has never been bound by any one of them” (128).

A few closing remarks. Don't buy this book through Concordia Publishing you will overpay. You can get it used off the internet for a 1/3 of the cover price. Second, Gene Veith is quoted on the back as recommending this book, and I suspect that Senkbeil would do the same for his. I'm not saying: Don't read *Spirituality of the Cross* or don't give it to a non-Lutheran. I am saying that Senkbeil's resonated, taught, and edified me in a way that Veith's did not. So much so, that I can count the number of times on one hand that I have recommended a congregation "Buy this book." This is one more.

Bible Translations “Visually” Compared



I ran across this chart and thought it was a reasonable, accurate, visual representations of the different Bible translations available today. “More meaning-based” means there is more interpretation

going on in the translation. The translator is telling you what he or usually a committee believes the original Hebrew or Greek means in English. “More form-based” goes by the form the word is in the Hebrew and Greek and putting it in a equivalent English form. This is going to be more literal of translation but harder to read in English.

Notice the MSG, The Message Bible, is not a translation at all. It's a paraphrase and ought not be regarded as God's Word at all. The same is true for the Living Bible and the Good News for Modern Man, AKA Today's English Version. These can be consulted for a turn of phrase, an aid to understanding, but know you're reading a deliberate paraphrase not a “thus saith the Lord.”

I personally use the NASB, but I prefer the 1977 not the 1995 version. There is now a 2020 version and that occasioned the article that I got this from. The article was critical of the 2020 NASB (<http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2020/05/more-on-translation-draft.html>). If you want an even more literal translation I, because I have read and studied, can recommend the American Standard Version. It is a 1901 translation and so painfully literal it is often described as “wooden”. If you like my ham-fisted translations of the Greek, you'll like this. If you would like the Greek insights without the whole translation, get yourself The Amplified Bible. You can get it used for under 20.00 and I believe the app is free for those who know what that jargon even means.

Notice GW, that's God's Word, some time I will share my critique of that name. Okay, I'll do it now: what the ELCA did, bogart the name Evangelical, Lutheran, Church, and America by calling themselves 'the', so God's Word did by naming their free-wheeling translation that. God's Word started out as the New Testament God's Word to the Nations. This was a project by Confessional Lutherans. Somehow, they lost control and God's Word was produced. In 2019 the Evangelical Heritage Version came out which was done by Lutheran pastors and professors. They have also produced a digital study Bible. The print edition of the Bible is about 25.00; the digital study Bible is 19.99.

As I have said many times, referencing someone else I remember not whom: The problem is not that we don't have an accurate translation of the Bible. The problem is that we don't read the translations we do have. Amen to that.

Greater Things Than These

Posted on March 18, 2021 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

In a series of dramatic revelations, the Lord shows the great abomination of the leaders of the Old Testament church culminating with their worship of the sun. He moves the narrative along saying each time that Ezekiel will see greater abominations than these (Ezk. 8). Out of Africa I will show you greater things here (where you are) than there (Africa).

In her 1937 book *Out of Africa* a woman under the pen name Isak Dinesen tells wonderful tales of her decades there. Twenty-five years later she revisits the book in *Shadows on the Grass*. What I relate is from the section “Fara” or “Barua a Soldani”. Since I listened to an audiobook and no print preview is available, I can be no more specific than this.

One of the natives living on her land has his leg crushed when a tree falls on it. She is called to help but has no morphine with her. She gives him a sugar cube she carried for the native boys on the plains herding goats. It actually seemed to help. *I will show you greater things than these.*

When she runs out, she doesn't know what to do till she remembers she has a letter from the King of Denmark, her home country, thanking her for a lion skin she had given him. The natives have high regard for the words of a king. She told him what it was and placed that letter on his stomach holding it firmly in place with her hand. The man with the shattered leg was soothed. When her car was fetched, the native insisted her personal servant drive so she could hold the letter in place. *I will show you greater things than these.*

When the news got out about the powerful, soothing power of the king's letter, it became a totem. Natives showed up asking for the powerful medicine. She kept it in a pouch with a cord which the native would carry to the ill. *I will show you greater things than these.*

Dinesen, whose real name is Karen Blixen, relates that the Arabs would write the words of the Koran in charcoal on rock and wash them off into a cup and give them to drink to suffering Muslims. It was the strongest medicine to them. *I will show you greater things than these.*

Now, you're screaming at the screen: “Placebo effect” or worse “ex opere operato” or perhaps, “Here the heretic Harris goes again.

The greatest thing that I can show you is the Word of the King of kings which we have. Surely, His Words are to be more revered than that of the king of Denmark's are. The greatest thing that I have to show you is better than drinking the words of the Koran. No, it's not masticating and swallowing the pages of Scripture. King Menelik of Ethiopia (1844-1913) ate a page or two of the Bible whenever he was sick or heavy-hearted believing the printed page had curative properties. “He died as a result of eating the Book of Kings in a heavy Egyptian edition” (*Wonder Book of Strange Facts*, 453).

The greatest thing I show you is that you eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Word made Flesh who promises He gave and shed them for you for the forgiveness of sins. The greatest thing I can assure you of is that where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life now and salvation forever. Finally, as great as the story out of Africa is, it pales compared to what comes out of the mouth of your Lord.

Sunscreen and Hunting

Posted on April 5, 2021 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

A dermatologist told me I should start wearing sunscreen when hunting. I tried it on several hunts and hated it. Why? It's a mixed message. The distinct odor of sunscreen is evocative of beeches and salt spray, not vegetation and guns. Cordite is the smell for these.

If you smell those at the beach, hit the ground. Somebody is shooting something.

Such discordance I felt when I attended the 2020 Palm Sunday contemporary service virtually at Bethel Lutheran, Bryan, Texas. It was neither fully contemporary nor liturgical. It followed the *Lutheran Service Book* sometimes, but the worship was a country music song. An aw-shucks sort of sadness of not being all I should be and the comfort that God loves a loser like me.

The mixed messaging went on in dress and song. The clergy were robed in black cassocks and red stoles. They sung “How Great Thou Art” in an up-tempo, toe-tapping way retaining the words while losing the majesty and awe. While both the DCE's children's message and the pastor's sermon did direct you to Baptism, the contemporary song “Open Our Eyes, Lord” wants “to reach out and touch him.” The

song also sings of wishing to hear Jesus “and help us to listen.” In neither case were the seeing or hearing of Jesus rooted in Word or Sacrament. Where do you suppose the lyricist, an Assembly of God Pentecostal, looks for Jesus?

Right where the next contemporary song, “Good, Good Father” directed you. “I’ve heard a thousand stories of what they think you’re like/ But I’ve heard the tender whispers of love in the dead of night/ And you tell me that you’re pleased/ And that I’m never alone.” This is the same source of revelation Eliphaz, “friend” of Job, used against him (Job 4:12-13). This is what Confessional Lutherans denounce as being from the devil. Read for yourself: “Therefore we ought and must constantly maintain this point, that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments” (Smalcald Articles, III, VIII, 10-11).

So, am I overreacting when I hear the senior pastor say now that there wouldn’t be communion on Maundy Thursday, “How do you preach on the Lord’s Supper when there is none? I don’t know maybe the Holy Spirit will speak good words to us that day.” The bio on his website says he is a 1987 graduate of Oral Roberts University.

The sermon was on Philippians 2: 5-11. The “Law” was that we’re not very good at having the mind of Christ. This is Roman Catholic preaching. We’re not completely lost, fallen; we’re just not as good as we should be, can be. Then the pastor asks: how can we do what Jesus did this week? This is what every good Evangelical or Non-denom wants to know. The pastor answered in Bronze Age Missouri Synod fashioned. We can do it because Jesus did it to the utmost.

Whether you mix Law and Gospel, contemporary and liturgical, Evangelical and Lutheran, it’s always the first of the pair that corrupts the latter.

Though this wasn’t a Communion Sunday below in italics is their Communion statement:

HOLY COMMUNION

Bethel Lutheran practices “Close” communion, that is, we wish for those taking communion to be “close” in what our church believes and practices. We ask that those who wish to commune agree to the following statement: I believe that God sent His Son, Jesus as my Savior from sin, Satan, and death, and that He is Lord of my life. I repent of my sins and ask God’s forgiveness for Jesus’ sake. I believe the Risen Christ is really present in the Sacrament and that with the

bread and wine all communicants receive His true Body and Blood. I resolve to dedicate myself anew to my Lord through His Church, by regular worship, study of His Word, faithful witness, and loving service. (<https://www.blcbs.org/attend/> accessed 4/19/20)

This is open Communion. (The 2017 book, *Closed Communion*, published by this pastor’s own denomination, has an extensive treatment of where the term “close” Communion came from and what is wrong with it.) “Close” rather than the Biblical, historical “Closed” Communion says doctrine is a matter of degrees. Close means there is closer and farther away.

No, doctrine is either right or wrong. Close doesn’t count. Except at Bethel, Bryan. They just “wish for those taking communion to be ‘close’ to what their church believes and practices.”

Would an ELCA Lutheran think he is “close enough”? The decision is left to the individual not the steward of the Mysteries of God, the pastor. So, his home congregation is in fellowship with the Reformed who don’t believe in the Real Presence and with Liberal Lutherans who don’t believe the Bible is God’s inerrant word but are woke to every social issue there is, except life in the womb. If he thinks he’s close enough to Bethel, Bryan, he communes with everyone at that altar.

Would such a person receive the Body and Blood of Jesus to his judgment? What about everyone communing with him? O I see. He would be judged but not them.

One more mixed message.

If Video Killed the Radio Star, What has the Internet Killed?

Posted on April 21, 2021 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

The song “Video Killed the Radio Star” was the first video to be played on MTV when the network was launched August 1, 1981. And some pundits and prophets trace all sorts of developments or devolutions from this event. TV changed, songs changed, kids changed too. Kids have always been about music but when your eyes are tuned to a song, the message is mainlined.

My point here is not that video killed the radio star. iHeartRadio would disagree with some justification. But I know that the internet has killed something, something bigger and more long lasting. What? Tell me. What? I don't know. I think it's the concept that truth is rooted in history and can be known. Once you give up the concept that truth can be known, all you're left with is conspiracies. Russian author, Andrei Narozov said this in a July 2011 *Chronicles* article, "From JFK to DSK" (37).

This observation popped into focus when I was preparing for St. Mark, the neglected evangelist. How many "St. Mark" any things are there compared to Saints Matthew and John and even St. Luke? Let's not even talk about St. Paul. He wins the popularity contest. But then higher criticism came into its full-throated unbelief, and Mark became the original Gospel. Once more very respected. Then the mythical Q surfaced, and the rest is history. Actually, it's conspiracy.

I digress. I came upon this factoid about Mark. He is buried at Venice. It's kind of funny how and why he got there, but that's not germane to my point. This is: "In this cathedral on Easter, the liturgical Gospel is announced as being recorded 'in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to *him*,' the reader dramatically pointing to the high altar under which the bones of Mark are supposed to rest" (Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 557). Is that cool or what?

On the various platforms – I'm amazed that I know what this means and am comfortable using it, but if the medium is the message watch out. The tech industry could've chosen another word to convey what a technology platform does. The word 'vehicle', or 'means', for example. None of the definitions from Oxford English Dictionary popped up by Google even includes that it's used in reference to computers.

Merriam-Webster has it as definition 5b. Get it? A word that has several definitions – none of them in the realm of computers per say – now has a technical one that is central to the realm (i.e., reign) of technology. Go figure. I'm sure "they" did. Oops, I'm back to conspiracy.

People who have no concept of being under or in authority think once they find a source contradicting you, they are golden or at least that view is as justifiable as yours. You can take any propositional statement I have made in the millions of sermon words posted on the internet, and Google will come back with dozens of statements "proving" me wrong. These won't be rooted in a time or place but in a post on Reddit, Quora, or Facebook. And increasingly now YouTube. "I watched a video" is the new way of citing someone.

Well, here's my citation. The guy buried right there, wrote this. His writing has been seized, burned, banned, and worst of all demythologized by those claiming to be Christians. Yet here it is. Better men, bigger men, brainer men have attacked St. Mark long before you or the latest village idiot on the internet.

I got it! My point is video may have killed the radio star, but the internet kills the brain cells of its [or should it be his or her?] users.

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JUNE 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
		1	2 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	3	4	5	
6	7	8	PASTOR ON VACATION				12
13	14	15	PASTOR ON VACATION				19
20	21	22	PASTOR ON VACATION				26
27	28	29 VOTERS MEETING 7 PM	30 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM				

JULY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	8	9	10
11	12	13 ELDERS MEETING 6:30 PM	14 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 DANIEL BIBLE STUDY 7:15 PM	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
VCS 10:00 AM – 1:15 PM						
1 MID-SUMMER MEAL						

JUNE - JULY 2021