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The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of United Lutheran Church

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THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR ANTHONY . . .

Normally I wouldn't write such an article, but the national and local atmospheres—the divisiveness and vitriol, the polarizing and anger—demand it. And the closer we get to the November election, the more heated the atmosphere will become. I want to address the matter by way of an anecdote from my first year of seminary.

The context is the home of an emeritus professor of New Testament (a "radical Lutheran," we might say) and his wife, during one of our mid-afternoon "Friday coffees." During these "Friday coffees"—a short distance from the Luther Seminary campus, we—young seminarians—would sip on coffee and discuss theology and its application to a whole spectrum of issues (politics, economics, science, church polity, etc.). It was within this context that the question came up as whether "Jesus was/is a liberal." The question revealed the various political orientations of the students around the living room. A handful were liberal Democrats, a handful were conservative Republicans. Some were liberal on some issues and conservative on others. The point: the room was filled with political diversity.

At some point during the conversation the distinguished professor gently broke in. And this is what he said, (paraphrased of course): "I want to remind you that we are justified [made holy] by Jesus Christ alone. Such a reality thereby has an exclusionary role. In this case: One is not justified ["made holy"] by political ideology, or party. We are not justified by the level of our social works and various stances on issues. We are justified, made holy by Christ alone who is the fulfillment of the law for us." But then he said something I do remember verbatim: "The crucified Christ is the outcropping upon which all ideologies—in this case political ones—come to a shipwreck."

That is: Every ideology, every political platform, every social agenda and crusade—no matter how noble, no matter how principled, no matter how impassioned we are about it—is tainted with Sin (normally the movement becomes exploited by self-interest at some fundamental level) which not only ultimately hijacks the movement/party, but aims in its self-righteous indignation to exclude, even destroy, opposites and adversaries.

Have you ever noticed how passion for a movement, an ideology, a political party, often turns into hatred for those on the other side? In our goal to serve humanity through our political agendas we end up hating those who oppose us and, ultimately, become a force of dehumanization. In the process we dehumanize ourselves. We become the darkness we declare we have come to eradicate! Our anger, resentment, literally makes us blind to the humanity of those who disagree with us. And worse, it lowers our I.Q.'s. Some don't have numbers to waste.

A famous 20th century theologian called "justification" the "Protestant Principle": That is, every ideology, every human movement—political, economic—is at best only partial, provisional, and distorted (due to Sin) in relation to the kingdom of God which only God ushers in through God's Word. As that theologian pointed out, to equate what is human (a party, a platform, a type of economy, etc.) with the kingdom of God is "demonic."

So I say: my goal through these months and following is to preach the kingdom of God, the justification which comes through Jesus Christ alone; the holiness which will not be equated, identified, with any political movement/party. Indeed, the kingdom of God critiques as partial and sinful all political and economic movements, even the ones I most strongly identify with. My goal will be to remind all that the One we worship was crucified by folks like us (with commitments/passions like ours), only to return—not mirroring our need for revenge—to embrace us unto eternal life. The victim embraces his victimizers. (Isn't that odd? In this era in which we celebrate the "victim," it is the "victim" who returns and ultimately "celebrates" his "victimizers" by integrating them back into relationship with him? calling them to do his ministry? Not exactly "PC" is it?)

Let us hold our political and economic viewpoints—for most these are how we understand a "faith active in love" on a large scale (and we can debate which models work the best!), but let us do so with humility: humility in the face of others (which, in turn, humanizes them), and humility before a God who judges all our ideas and movements as sinful, distorted, and provisional in light of the coming kingdom of God.

If you feel I have not bashed a political figure or party in accordance with your desires during my preaching, perhaps you need to reconsider the true object of your worship. My presence in the pulpit is not intended to affirm your idolatry, but lead you to name it.

– Election season 2020, Pr. Anthony

2020 United Golf Scramble—10th Anniversary

Sunday, September 13

Believe it or not, the United Golf Scramble is 10 years old this year!

That said, the committee has some lofty goals. Will you help us reach those goals?

Goal #1—Attract 20 teams in 2020. (2019—14 teams)

Goal #2—Raise \$10,000 on our 10th Anniversary (record year was 2015—\$5,000+)

NEW THIS YEAR: For the first time, we will have the auction set up online. Anyone in the world can bid on the items online. You do not need to be present at the event.

You can put together a team of four or sign up as an individual to be put on a team. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

You can check out the awesome items on the auction and bid on them at:

<https://www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/United-Lutheran-Golf-Scramble-10491>

To register or to sponsor a hole go to www.GolfStatus.com and search for “United Golf Scramble.”

Pick up a flier at church, or look it up on Facebook under 10th Annual United Lutheran Golf Scramble, or email Scott Ash at sash@nebraskasportscouncil.com



OLDER.WISER.LUTHERAN.SENIORS.



Because of the ongoing concerns and restrictions of Covid-19, O.W.L.S. will not meet for the remainder of 2020. Even though we can't meet, the group would like to continue the tradition of providing Christmas gifts for Havelock Manor residents who so appreciate being remembered. This year, only “Santa” (AKA Susan Fertig and her helpers) will shop, wrap, and deliver the gifts for O.W.L.S. participants. In order to do this, they will need monetary donations to purchase gifts for the manor's 24 residents. If you would like to make a contribution, you may send it to the church office or put it in the basket located in the Narthex.

Please clearly label your contribution as:

“OWLS Christmas Gifts”.

Donations need to be received by November 15.

EDUCATION

Sunday School:

For safety of teachers and students, lessons will be mailed twice monthly to families. These short object lessons, relating to a theme will be easy for families to talk about over a meal, before bed, etc.

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation:

September 9, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

September 23, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

Face masks are required.



Diapers for Pine Ridge

As part of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center's "basket ministries," diapers for young children and baby wipes are provided to families on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Diapers are distributed in packages of ten. Sizes 5 and 6 accounted for 57 percent of the 18,560 diapers distributed last year.



Diapers and wipes can be ordered through Amazon and shipped directly to:

Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center
51 East Highway 18
Pine Ridge, SD 57770.

To order diapers go to:
www.amazon.com

(Be sure to select Evangelical United Lutheran Church as your charity.)

2020 Pine Ridge Hygiene Kits

Collections will be through October 4.

Items Needed:

Bath towels, Combs, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Wash Cloths, Bar Soap and Shampoo (no trial sizes).

We will also accept monetary donations to purchase most-needed items.

Indicate the donation is for Hygiene Kits.

The donation bins will be outside the front doors on Sunday morning.

If you have questions, please contact the office.



United Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report Monday, August 10, 2020

Submitted herewith is the Balance Sheet and Summary Treasurer's Report for July 2020.

In review of the July financial reports for United Lutheran Church, note the following items:

On the balance sheet, our cash position remains good with Regular Checking \$177,167, Savings \$31,199, Memorial Fund \$44,730, and MIF Investment \$117,431 for a total of \$370,527.

The July Offering Income was \$15,214. Total July Operating Fund Income was \$16,378.

Total July Income was \$18,930.13.

The July Operating Expense was \$19,837. Total July Expenses were \$22,272.

The Total Operating Fund Expenses through July 2020 (\$144,607) is \$52,851 less than the Total Operating Fund Income through July 2020 (\$197,458). Offerings through July 2020 (\$166,635) is \$10,263 less than July 2019 (\$176,898). Total Operating Expenses through July 2020 (\$144,607) is \$45,714 less than July 2019 (\$190,321).

The months of June and July have seen a decrease in Offerings compared to 2019. Due to the decrease in Church activities our Expenses are lower than that of 2019 which keeps a positive cash flow.

Donations designated for Capital Improvements and/or the 2018 Renovation Project are Transferred from the Regular Checking Account to the Saving Account on a monthly basis.

Renovation Fund Balance (6/30/2020)	\$ 31,199 (Savings)
July Loan Payment	(2,144) (Not Transferred)
July Designated Donations	<u>942</u> (Not Transferred)
Renovation Fund Balance (7/31/2020)	\$ 29,997

Renovation Long Term Loan

	Principal	Interest
Beginning Balance 6/30/2020	\$ 302,497.68	\$ 14,539.53
Payment 7/1/2020	<u>1,118.41</u>	<u>1,025.59</u>
Principal Balance as of 7/31/2020	\$ 301,379.27	\$ 15,565.02

Monthly Loan Payments are made via Electronic Fund Transfer from Regular Checking on the 1st of the month. The Monthly Loan Payment amount (\$2,144) is transferred from the Renovation Fund (Saving Account) to Regular Checking monthly. This month's Capital Improvement Donations are well short of monthly Loan Payment.

Respectfully submitted, Dean A. Jaeger, Treasurer

Thanks . . .

Thank you all for thinking of me on my graduation. I love the quilt! It's great quality and will definitely be in my dorm for the winter.

-Thanks again, Jenna Miller

Thank you, quilters, for the cool and amazing quilt. Special thanks to the United Congregation for the gift card and supporting me as I developed into an adult. Everyone has always supported and pushed me towards greatness.

I appreciate the support and advice you've given me.

-Thank you, Jake Green

Thank you, LWR Quilters, for the quilt. I can assure you it will be put to good use in South Dakota. It was great being at the quilting table the time I helped, especially knowing the good work you ladies do for those in the community, at Pine Ridge, and abroad.

-Thanks again, Michael Schmidt

Thank you, Members of United, for the gift card. United has been my church and will continue to be my church for my whole life. It was where I was baptized, took first communion, was confirmed, and so much more. I've had the honor of working as a Sunday School Teacher, and giving back to a community that has given so much to me.

-Thank you, Michael Schmidt

Our Sympathies to . . .

Glenn & Violet Sorensen as they mourn the death of Violet's son from Colorado.

Lori Whyrick and family as they mourn the death of Lori's mother, Genevieve Kobza on Friday, August 21.

In Our Prayers . . .

Glenn Sorensen	Sandy Avila
Bill Williams	Lee Loschen
Cliff Becker	Dee Neeman
Margery Moore	Joseph Moore
Jim Hauptmeier	Kay Rung
Charmain Satree	Jeff Peterson
Marlyce Benjamin	

SCRIP Cards May Be Purchased

If you are interested in buying SCRIP cards contact George Hill at 402-430-9554. George will either deliver the SCRIP cards to be picked up at the church or to your home.

Thank you to all who have continued to support the SCRIP program at United during this time.

Lutheran Food Pantry

Currently the Food Bank of Lincoln is unable to provide food to local sites who usually rely on their donations to provide food for their clients. In order to try to fill a need, the Lincoln Lutheran Food Pantry is collecting donations of food to be distributed to Matt Talbot Kitchen, Fresh Start Home, The Good Neighbor Center, and the City Mission. Items needed include:

1 pound bag of rice	Canned fruit	Canned chicken
Ramen noodles	Hamburger helper	Dry pasta noodles
Canned meals with meat (spaghettios, ravioli, stew)		Peanut Butter
Juice (large cans or plastic bottles)	Canned beans (pinto, kidney, chili etc.)	
Pork and beans	Saltine crackers	Canned tomatoes (any kind)
Pancake mix	Syrup	Instant potatoes
Canned Peas and other canned vegetables (not green beans or corn)		

In Our Prayers

Please let the church office know if there has been a birth, baptism, marriage, illness, or death in your family that you would like to share. Let us know if someone is hospitalized or needs our prayers. If you give your permission, this request will be added to the list of prayers in the "Weekly Witness." If you would like immediate prayers for the individual, the office will initiate the Prayer Chain.

Missed a Worship Service?

If you miss coming to church for worship, you can listen to the service over the Internet.

Go to www.unitedlutheranlincoln.com and scroll down to "Listen Here." Or you can go to "Church" on the web site and select "YouTube Recording" to view the service.

You will also find the "Weekly Witness" and church bulletins so you can catch up on what is going on at church.

This is the schedule of events for September 2020.
Please check Facebook, e-mail, the website, and regular mail for further updates.

UNITED LUTHERAN CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2020						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 9:10a Staff Meeting	3	4	5
6 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion	7 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	8	9 9:10a Staff Meeting	10	11	12
13 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion 1:00p United Golf Scramble	14 6:00p Congregation Council Meeting	15	16 9:10a Staff Meeting	17	18	19
20 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 8:15a Holy Communion	21	22	23 9:10a Staff Meeting 7:00p Confirmation Pictures	24 9:00a Assemble October "Messenger"	25 ⁴	26
27 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Rite of Confirmation/ No Communion	28 7:00p All Ministry Meeting	29	30 9:10a Staff Meeting			

Office Hours

Office hours Monday through Friday:
8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

Watch the "Weekly Witness" for changes of upcoming events or check-out our website
at: www.unitedlutheranlincoln.com

Website contains the "Weekly Witness," Sunday worship bulletin, "Messenger," calendar, and the recorded service.
Facebook will post the visual sermon as well as other information. The service can also be found on YouTube.



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Confirmation Rite Sunday, September 27 at the 9:30 Service

As you know, the rite of Confirmation—which had been scheduled for the last Sunday in April—was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. With that said . . .

. . . the Rite of Confirmation will be held on **Sunday, September 27, at the 9:30 a.m. worship service.** This service, conducted within guidelines which have been set in place during the pandemic, will consist of a modified liturgy, homily, hymn of the day, prayers, and the Rite of Confirmation (“Affirmation of Baptism”). Communion will not be offered at this service.



For those members who have become accustomed to attending the 9:30 a.m. worship service during this time, but desire to receive the Lord’s Supper, we ask that you arrange to come to our 8:15 a.m. worship service on this Sunday. However, even if you have no one being confirmed, you are permitted to worship at the 9:30 service. We have a large class, but there will be room in the sanctuary for non-confirmation families due to the fact that confirmation family units will be seated together.

Pictures will be taken on September 23 at 7:00 p.m. Confirmands will be photographed individually.

Confirmands are:

Eli Ash, Marisol Cuevas, Hannah Dean, Haylea Dean, Lily Hastings, Lydia Hastings,
Abigail Mertens, Allison Morrow, Luke Schmidt, and Joe Senstock.