

## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

*“For all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23*

Spoiler alert! I am going to share something earth shattering. Are you ready? No-one is perfect except for Christ. Sorry, I probably should have warned you to sit down before you read that. I hated to be the one to break the news to you but the truth had to come out sooner or later.

There was a man who lived five hundred years ago. He was a devout Catholic. Prayed often. He was inspired by the Bible and some of the scientists of his day. Among his primary concerns were the muslim expansion by force of arms, and bringing the gospel to people who hadn't heard it. At one point in time, fellow Catholics petitioned to have him declared a saint in the Catholic Church. He was not made one because he had fathered a child out of wedlock and had not provided a miracle. At the outset he is quoted as being totally against force as a means of conversion, and of having a very loving concern for the people needing to hear the gospel. He sailed on August 3, 1492 for the Indies and landed in the “New World” on October 12. The Dominican Republic celebrates that day and this man for bringing Christianity to them. He is of course Christopher Columbus. Later expeditions would have aspects to them that were not “Christian” in nature.

I am not writing to justify his life or those that traveled with him. Only God can justify a person and that is done by the all atoning sacrifice of Christ. I am not here to gloss over, dismiss, or condone the sins of others. Rather I write this because we need to recognize the sin of pride and the sins we ourselves are inclined and encouraged to commit.

We do not have the right to judge a person from a different time period and culture based on 21st century American thought. We can learn from their mistakes, so that we do not commit the same sins. Those who lived before us did the best they could, just as hopefully today, we can say the same about ourselves. Only God can judge. It is neither our right nor our privilege to do so.

So to recap, only God can judge. Only God can justify. All men/women fall short of the glory of God as sinners.

We cannot, therefore, judge the sins of the dead and sin against the living and have justice. Recently, forty-five churches were burned down in Canada because of sins committed over one hundred years ago. Burning down those churches did not achieve justice.

Lost in all this is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, who while we were yet sinners gave up everything to become sin for us that we would be justified. That we would be seen as if we had never sinned. He has paid the price for all sin past and present. Though we may not consider it justice, we receive what we don't deserve. We receive what Christ deserves. It is His sacrifice that cleanses us, and His mercy and love that recreates us every day as perfect in the sight of the Father.

It is a worthy endeavor to seek justice but we need to keep focus. Losing focus on God is what caused all sins that have ever occurred. Our flawed judgements don't entitle us to judge the living or the dead. We are not entitled to judge those departed, only to recognize the sins we don't want to commit ourselves. As you think about this I would encourage you to listen to Amy Grant's song “What about the love.”

SDG,

Pastor

If you have a prayer need or praise to share, or to start/participate in a bible study or prayer team, please contact Pastor or Amy Betts in the church office anytime at 570-703-0607.

# News of Lutheran Education!

*Working in partnership with God's people to raise up a new generation of faithful Christian men and women!*

## Academy Needs

In the past we have been asked to share a list of supplies big and small that are needed at the academy. Here are a few things we still need. If you know someone who has an item they are looking to part with or if you would like to sponsor the purchase of an item, please contact Amy Betts at the school. Thank you so much to those who have already donated items!

- \* Magnetic wall-mount whiteboard - 8ft by 4ft
- \* Two large wall-mount bulletin boards - either 4ft by 5ft or 4ft by 6ft
- \* Bookcases of any size
- \* Clear plastic tubs for education material storage and organization
- \* A Train Table or other play equipment for the Kindergarten room
- \* Wooden puzzles and other puzzles with large pieces (24 piece maximum)

## NEW HIRE

The Academy Board is pleased to announce a new teacher - **David Haines** - has been hired to replace Mr Adam Benjamin. Mr Haines will teach the 4-6th grade class for the 2021-22 school year. We will include more about this new teacher in the September newsletter.

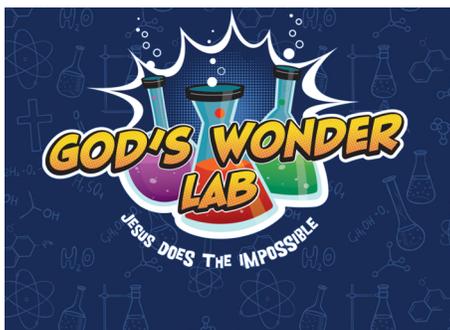
Mr Haines will be welcomed and installed as a teacher during Rally Day at Peace on Sunday, September 12th at the 10:30am service

## RALLY DAY

**Saturday, September 12th**

We will head into fall with the return of Sunday School hour at 9:30am beginning, September 12th. There is a Sunday School classes for ALL ages to attend every Sunday.

During the 10:30am worship on Rally Day, we will install a new teacher and bless all the staff of The Lutheran Academy. We will install the Sunday School teachers at Peace, and say a blessing over ALL youth who have returned to school for a new year of education.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

August 16-20 from 5:30-8:00pm

**Our God can make the impossible possible!**

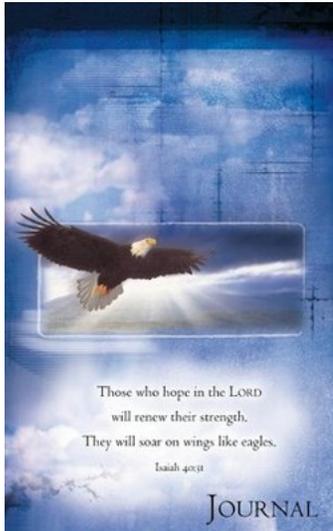
**He does marvelous things!**

A science lab conducts experiments that explain how things are possible. In Jesus' ministry, He did things that are impossible. His greatest miracle of all was dying on the cross and rising from the dead for our salvation. At God's Wonder Lab, discover that Jesus does the impossible for us.

Registration forms are at the back of church. Isabelle Kramer is leading VBS again this year and can really use some volunteers to assist. To find out more information or to sign up to volunteer see her information station at church, email her at [vbsattla.lmc@gmail.com](mailto:vbsattla.lmc@gmail.com) or call 570-677-8806.

# Pray without ceasing - I Thes. 5:17

**Remember to ask: "How can I pray for you?"**



Last month you were asked to think about the questions: Do people have a choice in what they do or is what they will do already predetermined?

How did you answer the question? Did you surprise yourself with what you wrote? Was it a response you were proud of? Does the way you live reflect how you responded or was how you answered very different from how you live?

Your question for August is:  
**Are there invisible beings that exist?**

Make sure to place the date and your thoughts on the page. If you would like to discuss them with Pastor that would be great! If you want to keep them to yourselves that is fine as well. You may also want to note whether you prayed for anyone that day and whether you read the Bible at all that day. Don't worry about how few or how many pages you use each day. At the end of the challenge, Pastor will ask you to share some insights from the challenge anonymously for inclusion in the newsletter.

(The questions I am asking you are inspired by Questions on the website of the New Jersey District of The LCMS written by Rev. Dr. Anthony Steinbronn, author of a book on worldview.)

## + HYMN OF THE MONTH: #555 Salvation Unto Us Has Come

"Salvation unto us has come" was written by Paul Speratus and may be the earliest expression of the teachings of the reformers in song. Speratus was born December 16, 1484. His third verse speaks to all those who believe we can earn heaven or create heaven on earth. "It was a false, misleading dream that God, His law, had given that sinners could themselves redeem and by their works gain heaven." Rather, the law "brings our inbred sin to light that lurks within our nature." So we give "blessing, honor, thanks and praise to Father, Son and Spirit" for the gift of salvation. In 1523 Speratus worked with Martin Luther on the first Lutheran hymnal. As we sing this hymn may we never rely on our own works but only those of Christ.

### SUMMER HOURS

One Sunday morning service at 9:18am.  
Saturday service will continue at 5:00pm.

## MISSIONARIES IN KENYA Sunday, August 8th at 10:30am

You are invited to learn about missionaries from our Synod who are serving in Kenya through a program called Capstone Ministries.

A presentation will be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 10:30am in their fellowship hall.

### AUGUST

#### Birthdays

Levi Black 1

#### Baptism Birthdays

Tammy McClure 12

Joann Roberts



Join in celebrating the house demolition and new parking lot with a **picnic** following our morning worship service.

This event has been rescheduled from August 1st and will now be held (rain or shine) on **Sunday, August 15th at 11am**. A sign up sheet is at the back of church so you can let us know if you plan to attend. Pastor will say a blessing over the space and we will follow with a picnic.

Hamburgers, hotdogs, sausage, chicken, and drinks will be provided. If you are able to bring a side or dessert, please indicate that on the sign up sheet. You can also call the church office if that is more

convenient for you. We hope to see you all there!

## Calling All Bakers

As part of the Chicken BBQ Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, August 21st, we would like to have a bake sale. Please let Amy Betts in the office know if you can bake an item for the sale, or sign up in the narthex on that sign up sheet. Thank you in advance for supporting the event.

## Host Family Opportunity

My name is Amanda Colecio, and I am going to be attending Johnson College in the fall. I just graduated from Weatherly Area High School 8th in my class, with a 4.0 gpa. At Johnson, I will be studying in their Veterinary Technician program, in hopes to become a Veterinary technician. My long term goal is to eventually become a veterinarian.

I am looking for a family to host me for the fall semester, with possible renewal for the spring semester. I live about an hour and a half away from the Scranton area, and if there's heavy traffic, it may take me longer to get to school. This makes it pretty difficult to commute. Johnson College does not have dorms available to their students on campus, and the options I found for housing around the area are out of my budget or have a waiting list to get in.

I am a triplet, so I will be putting myself through college. I was able to work hard for some scholarships strictly for school, but I will have to pay out of pocket for housing. I currently work 3 jobs, and I plan to find a part time job in a veterinary clinic soon. A little bit about me is that I am a practicing Catholic, and I currently cantor for my church Our Lady of Lourdes in Weatherly. I am part of the Diocese of Allentown, and my religion is a very important part of my life.

If you know of any families that may be interested in hosting college students, such as myself, please give them my mother's contact information (listed below). You are also more than welcome to call my parish office for a reference. That will also be listed below. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

God's blessing,  
Amanda

Jennifer Colecio  
(570) 956-3394  
momttripletsaaa@gmail.com

Ron Byer  
Director of Worship  
Our Lady of Lourdes  
(570) 929-1073



Ladies Luncheon  
**Saturday, September 11**  
11:00am - 1:00pm

On September 11th, we will host our fourth annual Ladies Luncheon for the mothers and grandmothers of the children of our Lutheran Academy and the Ladies of Peace Lutheran Church. The event will be held from 11am-1pm here at Peace. As always, there will be delicious food and time to talk to old friends as well as make some new ones. Ladies please share with your friends and let Pastor or Amy Betts know if you will attend.

The coloring page in the newsletter each month can be turned in and we will send them to the residents at The Gardens at Greenridge where our beloved Audrey Russell lives.

God Bless You! From your friend \_\_\_\_\_ at Peace Lutheran Church.





# Chicken BBQ Dinner Fundraiser

**Saturday, August 21st  
4:00-6:00 pm**

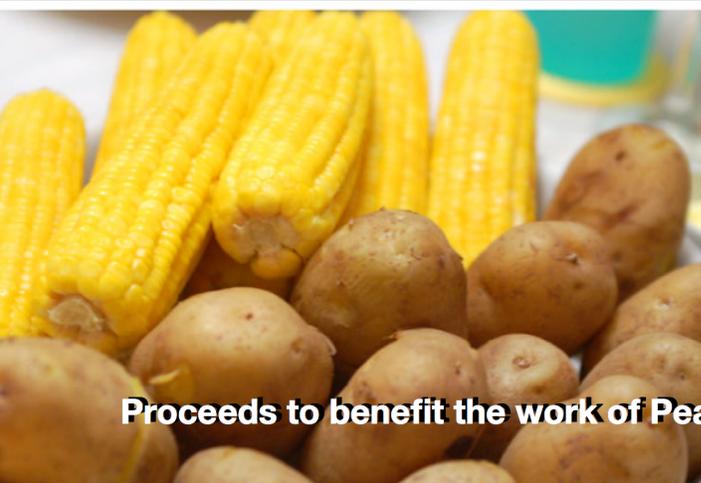
**Peace Lutheran Church**  
2506 N Main Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18508

**\$10 each**

**Eat in or Take out**

Get tickets by calling the office  
at 570-703-0607  
or visit [www.yourpeace.org](http://www.yourpeace.org)

**Dinner includes:  
1/2 Chicken, Baked  
Potato, Baked Beans,  
Corn, Roll & Cookie**



**BAKE SALE TOO**

**Proceeds to benefit the work of Peace Lutheran Church and the community it serves.**

# AUGUST 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Rev. Kurt Laskowsky, Zion Lutheran Church, Hurley, SD	2 Dr. Peter Kurowski, Zion Lutheran Church, Canisota SD	3 Rev Leonard Spiehs, Zion Lutheran Church, Wessington Springs, SD	4 Zion Lutheran Church, Hamill, SD	5 Rev Andrew Wolgram, Zion Lutheran Church, Andover, SD	6 Rev Ray Greenseth, Zion Lutheran Church, Presho, SD	7 Rev Daniel Grimmer, Zion Lutheran Church, Mitchell, SD
8 Rev Gregory Lehr, Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD	9 Rev Brian Lemcke, Zion Lutheran Church, Delmont, SD	10 Rev Brian Meadows, Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD	11 Rev Kenneth Johnson Zion Lutheran Church, Avon, SD	12 Rev Timothy Rynearson, Zion Lutheran Church, White, SD	13 Zion Lutheran Church, Waubay, SD	14 Rev Nathanael Biberdorf, Zion Lutheran Church, New Effington, SD
15 Rev Robert Hinkley Jr., Zion Lutheran Church, Chamberlain, SD	16 Rev Delwyn & Lenita Campbell and family, Missionary Gary, Indiana, USA	17 Deaconess Danielle Putnam, Missionary, Dominican Republic	18 Rev Ted & Rebecca Krey and family, Missionary, Dominican Republic	19 Rev Joel & Clarion Fritsche, Missionary, Dominican Republic	20 Rev Dr Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann, Missionary, Dominican Republic	21 Deaconess Caitlin and Seminarian Jean Carlos Ramirez, Missionary, Dominican Republic
22 Erin Mackenzie, Missionary, Dominican Republic	23 Johanna Heidorn, Missionary, Dominican Republic	24 Courtney Zalmanoff, Missionary, Dominican Republic	25 Kate Philips, Missionary, Dominican Republic	26 Cindy Pine, Missionary, Dominican Republic	27 Rev Jonah and Elisabeth Burakowski, Missionary, Dominican Republic	28 Rev David and Jenni Preus, Missionary, Dominican Republic
29 Jana Inglehart, Missionary, Dominican Republic	30 Blake and Elizabeth Warren, Missionary, Dominican Republic	31 Tirzah Krey, Missionary, Dominican Republic	<b>PRAYER CALENDAR</b> Pastors and Congregations in South Dakota, and missionaries			



*Two Finnish leaders are being prosecuted for articulating the historic Christian teaching on human sexuality. Here is a summary from the LCMS and the following page is the statement from the International Lutheran Council. Please speak with Pastor if you have any questions or want to speak further on this issue.*

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## **The church confesses Christ in the face of persecution**

July 29, 2021

St. Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him, that all his words would bear witness to the truth of God's Word, and that in all he did, he might proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:18–19).

The church prays that Christians, and especially those called into the Office of the Holy Ministry, might be given boldness and strength to confess the truth of God's Word, even in the face of persecution and opposition. Where persecution occurs, and where governments fail to protect the right teaching of Scripture, the church confesses Christ and stands on the truth of God's Word.

Finland's prosecutor general has charged the Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola, diocesan dean and bishop-elect of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, with incitement against a group of people. The charges stem from his agreement with a 2004 booklet that articulates historic Christian teaching on human sexuality. In addition, the prosecutor general has similarly charged Dr. Päivi Räsänen, a Finnish member of Parliament who authored the booklet identifying homosexuality as a sin and teaching that a failure to recognize sin as sin undermines the very need for a Savior.

Through a recent International Lutheran Council statement signed by 48 confessional Lutheran leaders worldwide, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison addressed these events: "The actions of the Finnish State in prosecuting Christians for holding to the clear teaching of the very words of Jesus regarding marriage and sex (Matt. 19:4–6) are egregious. ... We Lutherans make this strong confession along with Drs. Pohjola and Räsänen."

Join us in praying for Christians throughout the world, that boldness of confession would lead all to Christ and Him crucified, as the church stands on the unchanging truth of God's Word.





## INTERNATIONAL Lutheran Council

### **A Protest and Call for Free Religious Speech in Finland:**

### **An International Lutheran Condemnation of the Unjust Criminal Prosecution of the Rev. Dr. Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen, and a Call for All People of Good Will to Support the Freedom of Religious Expression in Finland**

“The blood of Jesus, God’s Son, cleanses us from all our sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7–9).

As living heirs of the Lutheran Reformation and leaders of our respective churches, we confess that these apostolic words are addressed to each of us daily, and this is our message to the world. When government curtails and attacks this message, it ceases to function as God intended. The undersigned confess that good government and the guaranties of freedom of religion, speech, and all basic human rights are good gifts from God. The Augsburg Confession (AC) states that the Gospel

does not overthrow civil authority, the state, and marriage, but requires that all these be kept as true orders of God, and that everyone, each according to his own calling, manifest Christian love and genuine good works in his station of life. Accordingly, Christians are obliged to be subject to civil authority and obey its commands and laws in all that can be done without sin. (AC XVI; Romans 13:1-7)

But authority holds only in its own jurisdiction. The government holds sway over externals, the Word of God over internals. “The civil magistrate protects not minds but bodies and goods from manifest harm. The Gospel protects minds from ungodly ideas, the devil, and eternal death. Consequently, the powers of church and civil government must not be mixed.” (AC XXVIII). Since faith must remain free, AC XVI concludes that when the commands of government cannot be obeyed without sin, “we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).” Indeed, if government oversteps its bounds and encroaches on religious freedom and religious speech, what other rights shall it take away?

**We therefore protest** the unjust treatment of the Bishop Elect of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF), the Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola, and of Dr. Päivi Räsänen M.P., a longstanding member of parliament. The actions of the Finnish State in prosecuting Christians for holding to the clear teaching of the very words of Jesus regarding marriage and sex (Matthew 19:4–6) are egregious. And this particularly so since the accused clearly affirm the divinely given dignity, value and human rights of all, including all who identify with the LGBTQ community. Christ Himself mandates love for all. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31).

We Lutherans make this strong confession along with Drs. Pohjola and Räsänen. The vast majority of Christians in all nations, including Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox, share these convictions. Would the Finnish Prosecutor General condemn us all? Moreover, shall the Finnish State risk governmental sanctions from other states based on the abuse of foundational human rights?

- The following cause us grave concern:
  - > The decision of 29 April 2021, taken by the Prosecutor General of Finland, to charge the Rev. Dr. Pohjola, Diocesan Dean and Bishop Elect of the ELMDF and Dr. Räsänen, a longstanding member of parliament, former Minister of the Interior, and physician, with the alleged offences of “ethnic agitation” under Chapter 11, Section 10, of the Finnish Penal Code.
  - > The criminal prosecution of the Rev. Dr. Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen based on a 2004 pamphlet titled, *As Man and Woman He Created Them: Homosexuality and the Challenge to the Christian Concept of Man*, published by the Luther Foundation of Finland, and containing statements such as, “According to the Christian concept of humanity, everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, is equal and of equal value” (p. 13).<sup>1</sup> These charges, based on a document that has already been in the public domain for seventeen years, demonstrate an outrageous overreach and agenda.
  - > Two further charges brought against Dr. Räsänen. One is based on a short June 2019 tweet, after the national church (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church) announced its official partnership with the LGBT event “Pride 2019.” In the tweet, Dr. Räsänen questioned the action in light of Scripture, and attached an image of Romans 1:24–27. The other charge is based on a short excerpt from a December 2019 one-hour Finnish Broadcasting Corporation radio program on theology, sexual ethics, and politics. On the program, Dr. Räsänen said that God did not create man as a homosexual.
  - > The criminal prosecution of the Bishop Elect of the ELMDF, along with a leading Christian public figure, for public expressions of faith. This raises serious and troubling questions regarding the right to freedom of religion and freedom of speech in Finland. With that in mind,
- We urge the Finnish authorities to ensure the protection of human rights for all people in Finland. International human rights law robustly protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression, as does the Constitution of Finland. Under Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone has the right to manifest their confession of faith in worship, practice, and teaching, and to express their deeply held beliefs publicly.
- We note that democratic societies worldwide guard religious freedom and freedom of expression as vitally important. Legal protection of these rights is founded on the inherent dignity of the human person who has the natural right to engage in public discourse on issues related to the meaning and purpose of society and human flourishing. The actions taken by the Prosecutor General of Finland against the Rev. Dr. Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen not only undercut these basic freedoms, but also introduce the risk of sanctions by other democratic governments based on the serious abuse of human rights.<sup>2</sup>
- We are all diminished by the overreach of prosecutorial and state power manifest in arbitrary and egregious interferences with the rights of Christians to proclaim their beliefs openly and publicly. This is, in effect, an attack on all citizens.
- We believe, teach, and confess that the Lutheran Christian faith calls on us to share the Good News of the free forgiveness of Christ with all people (John 3:16; Acts 1:8) in a spirit of joy and love. We are fully aware of our own sins, failings, and need for forgiveness. While it is understandable that some persons may feel challenged or upset by the message of the Gospel of Christ and its universal call to repentance and faith, we believe that an appropriate public space for dialogue in society necessitates guarantees in law that preclude individuals, organizations, or the state from unjustified curtailment of the fundamental right of Christians, and indeed all individuals and groups, to engage in public discourse.

<sup>1</sup> Päivi Räsänen, *As Man and Woman He Created Them: Homosexuality and the Challenge to the Christian Concept of Man*, ed. Juhana Pohjola, Morning Star, no. 29 (Helsinki: Luther Foundation of Finland, 2004), English trans. at <http://hp.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Male-and-female-He-created-them.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Berkowitz, Robert P. George, and other human rights lawyers and academics have petitioned the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to designate and sanction Prosecutor General Toivonen for “a gross violation of human rights,” [realclearpolitics.com/articles/2021/05/28/a\\_letter\\_to\\_the\\_us\\_commission\\_on\\_international\\_religious\\_freedom\\_145839.html](https://realclearpolitics.com/articles/2021/05/28/a_letter_to_the_us_commission_on_international_religious_freedom_145839.html).

