

Good News

September 2022



Newsletter of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

What is the Bible? What purpose does it still serve in our culture? Has it had its day? Is the Bible now obsolete? Should we even bother with it anymore? These are all important questions. And I was thinking about these questions, because I was listening to a lecture the other day by Professor Emeritus Ralph Williams, who teaches at the University of Michigan.

Now this was a lecture I had heard before by Williams, but not recently. I have the lecture recorded on CD, but hadn't picked it up for a long time. But something triggered my memory of the lecture, and so I took the recording off my shelf and popped it into my car's CD player.

And during this lecture, Williams talks about the Bible as a "site" of millennial discourse. What he means by this is that the ancient texts of the Bible are a place where generation after generation have come to gather to discuss important ethical and moral questions. And in his talk Williams asks whether it is true that we read the text of the Bible or the text of the Bible read us? In other words, when we read the Bible, do we not see the text describing very poignantly our human condition? Does the text not in fact read us?

Case in point, in the story of Cain and Abel, after Cain has risen up and killed his brother Abel, Cain talks with God. And Cain is afraid that now that he has killed his brother Abel, every human being will want to kill him (Cain). He is afraid that every human being will want REVENGE on him, because he killed Abel. And there it is, the Bible reading us, because that is the human instinct, that is, to avenge death with more death. So Cain is terrified. And so then, God puts a mark on Cain, as a sign of protection, because at this point human beings can't be trusted. Human beings will want Cain dead. The death penalty is not humanity's prerogative. It is God's.

This is just one example of how the Bible can serve as a "site" for ethical and moral discourse. But there are many, many more. Consider also the story of Adam and Eve, where Adam and Eve disobey God and eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And what do Adam and Eve do when they are caught by God? They blame others. Adam says, "The woman you gave me, God, made me eat. It is the woman's fault, and by the way, it is your fault too, God, for you gave her to me." And Eve says, "It is the serpent's fault." Adam and Eve deny responsibility. It is the text reading us again. For human beings, when caught in sin, deny culpability, deny responsibility. So what does ethical and moral behavior look like in light of accepting responsibility? Here again, then, we see how the Bible can serve as a "site" for ethical and moral discourse.

This is why it is important for us to read the Bible. This is why it is important for us to know the stories of the Bible. This is why it is important for us to talk about the stories of the Bible with other people. It is one thing to read the Bible so as to know that Moses went up Mount Sinai to retrieve the Ten Commandments. And it is one thing to read the Bible so as to know that Noah built an ark. But it is something else altogether to read the stories of the Bible whereby we see the stories as speaking to our human condition. It is another thing altogether to know that the Bible is reading us, and to then engage with other people about what we can learn about our existential being.

Think of it like this. After Adam and Eve disobey God and eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve hide. And God comes along and asks, "Where are you?" And we can read that on the surface as though God is inquiring as to their literal whereabouts. But on a much deeper level, the question probes into the very state of Adam and Eve's conscience, such as to ask "Where are you in your thoughts, feelings, and being-ness?" Make sense? It is different kind of Bible reading.

My point is that we have been given a great inheritance from our ancient ancestors. We never question a benefactor who bequeaths us \$1 million dollars, "What am I to do with this? What good will it do me? I didn't ask for it. I don't want it." And yet, we oftentimes do this with the Bible, saying, "What am I to do with this? What

good will it do me? I didn't ask for it. I don't want it." But the Bible is our inheritance from our forebears of the faith, and oftentimes we don't even crack it open to see the great value inside for us and for the human family. The Bible is a "site" of ethical and moral discourse for one generation after another. We ought to treasure as a human species, like any great family heirloom. And so, I invite you to come to Bible study and Adult Sunday School, and discover the Bible anew for what it has to say to us and about us. The text is reading us.

In Christ, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*



The Lessons for September 2022

September 4 — Pentecost 13

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

September 11 — Pentecost 14

Exodus 32:7-14

Psalm 51:1-10

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15"1-10

September 18 — Pentecost 15

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

September 25 — Pentecost 16

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Psalm 146

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

Congregational Meeting

Please plan to attend our annual congregational meeting scheduled for Sunday, September 25th immediately following our morning worship. Mark your calendars! At this meeting we will have our election of new council members & handle other business.



Parish Staff

Rev. Dr. Joel D. Petruschke, pastor
Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant
Mitchell Sensenig, organist

Good News is a monthly publication of **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour**, 420 North Progress Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109, 717-545-9992, ossec@comcast.net. **Deadline** for submission is the third Monday prior to publication month.

If you do not have email or internet access, your addressed copy of *Good News* will be available in your church mailbox the first weekend of each

About Worship

We often think that religion should give us the answer to life's questions. We often think that everything will be fine if we follow God's will, if we are good. But the truth is that that is not always the case. The book of Job is the prime example. The character of Job is such that he is completely faithful to God, and yet God allows the devil to bring immense suffering to Job to test his faithfulness toward God. What kind of God does that?

And Job's friends are of no help. They tell Job that he (Job) must have done something wrong in order for Job to be suffering so, the thought being if you are bad you will experience bad things. But Job knows he (Job) is innocent, and yet he still suffers. It is a classic case of "why do bad things happen to good people?"

And then there is that most strange of verses in the Old Testament, Isaiah 45:7, where God says, "I form light and create darkness. I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things." God creates both good and evil? It is a most challenging thought. What are we to do with such a thought?

For me, this past summer was both wonderful and awful. It was wonderful in the sense that my wife and I made some new friends. And, we travelled to the beach and to Lake Chautauqua. And we watched our kids prepare for new adventures at college. These were all great things, wonderful things.

But this summer also brought us a lot of tears. We mourned the passing of a senior from Middletown, with whom my son was considering to roommate at college. We mourned the sudden death of a 37-year old man who was an accomplished keyboardist and organist. He died in a car accident. We mourned the passing of others who were members of our churches, whom we loved and will now miss. And so even though there have been great things this summer, this summer has also been extremely difficult.

And so, I have been pondering this question, "What kind of God do we worship?" Do we worship a God that is so capricious as to allow suddenly a faithful servant like Job to suffer? Do we worship a God that creates both weal and woe, good and evil? The Bible is honest with its struggles about who God is and what God is about? Like people, whom we know live messy lives and are extremely complicated by nature, for we ourselves have messy, complicated lives, maybe God is, too. The Bible at the very least would seem to suggest so.

At the end of the book of Job, Job puts God on trial to answer for his strange, incomprehensible ways. And we have to appreciate what God ultimately says, and I paraphrasing here, but God says, "Who are you to question me? Did you create everything around you? Did you understand the workings of all creation? No! So who are you to question me." And Job is humbled and he repents of his arrogance that he should question God.

Life is both full of good and evil, and even though we suffer terrible things in life - heartache, grief, death - I think the best any of us can do is humble ourselves before God, and even however weakly utter, even in our profound tears and brokenness, "Alleluia. Praise God. Praise God for our existence and all that it entails. Praise God."

Manna Food Pantry

Our "2nd Sunday" food collection is still ongoing. During this time of continuous rising food prices food pantries are seeing a greater demand of their services. If you would like to make a donation you may bring your items into the church & place them on the table in the Narthex at any time. There is a list of suggested items now on the table. If you would like to make a monetary donations, please mark your envelopes "**Manna Food Pantry**" and place it with your regular giving envelope. Thank you.



A Word on Stewardship

For this article I want to focus on the “stewardship of our lives”, namely in the event of a threat to our very person. Our council president Anneke Fleming and I recently attended an event in Harrisburg entitled “Houses of Worship Safety Initiative.” The keynote speaker was Dr. Aaron Cotkin, who is a Social Science Research Specialist working at the U.S. Secret Service Threat Assessment Center. And although I thought this was a good presentation, I didn’t feel it answered the question of what we should do if a person were to come into our church building with the intent to do harm to people. Instead, the presentation focused on 1) how to identify persons WITHIN our community who might pose a threat, 2) how to assess that threat, and 3) how to manage that threat. But what if the threat comes from the OUTSIDE, unannounced, without warning? What do we do then? That’s what I wanted to know.

And so, I want to share with you some thoughts in answer to the question of what we should do if, heaven forbid, someone were to come into our church with the intent to do harm to us. First, we need to be prepared. And the best way to be prepared is to have an escape plan, and to mentally prepare ahead of time by committing that escape plan to memory. I have found the book *The Unthinkable - Who Survives when Disaster Strikes and Why* by Amanda Ripley to be an excellent resource in this regard. And the number one takeaway of this book, in my opinion, is that whenever we walk into a public space, whether it be a theater or sports arena or concert hall, we should locate the exits and we should consider various disaster scenarios and mentally walk through how we will escape. The reason for doing this is obvious. Whenever disaster strikes, we usually tend to freeze and our mind shuts down. But if we have a plan in place, and have mentally envisioned our own escape, we are that far ahead should disaster strike. So that is number one, mentally walk through your escape plan in whatever space you find yourself.

And with that in mind, I want us to consider the worship space at church. Our church sanctuary has two egresses. Everyone, or almost everyone, comes and goes through the double doors in the back of the church. And my guess is that if there ever were an incident at church, the perpetrator would use those doors, too. And so, we need to be mindful of the other egress toward the front of the church. Now, once we go through that door at the front of the church, our likely inclination would probably be to go either toward the Trinity Room or down the hallway that leads to the narthex. But, did we know that if we turn immediately to our right out of that door, we would come to another door that leads to the outside of the building? And that would be the way we would want to go - to get out of the sanctuary and out of the building. Thankfully that door out of the building cannot be opened from the outside, so again any evil actor is likely not going to be coming through that door at the front of the sanctuary. So, I would encourage us all to mentally walk through this escape plan. You may even want to take a few minutes on Sunday morning to physically walk through this escape plan.

Finally, let me just say a few more things about what we should do if someone were to come into our sanctuary with the intention to do harm to us. When confronted with a threat like a shooter, the first thing we are to do is run and escape, if we can. But short of that, we are to seek a hiding place. And third, if we can’t run away nor hide, we are to fight back. And also, as callous as this may sound, the safety experts say that we shouldn’t try to play the hero in the sense that we try to save others. If we can get ourselves out, that is our first priority. We shouldn’t try to help others to safety, because that puts all of us at risk. Again, I know that sound callous, but I do think there is truth to it.

I hope this information helps. Truly, I wish we didn’t need to concern ourselves about such things. But as much as we like to think of our place of worship as a refuge from the trials and tribulations of life, we can’t ignore the fact that there are those in the world who wish to do others harm, and will seek whatever means at their disposal to do so.



Dear Padre,

What is materialism? How does it relate to our Christian lives?

Signed, Wondering How It "Matters,"

Dear "Wondering,"



Materialism can actually be defined two ways. One definition of materialism is to be focused on possessing material objects. In short, materialism is likened to coveting. The second definition of materialism is the belief that there is no spiritual world around us, but that which is real is that which consists of matter.

You can probably see how both definitions of materialism relate to our Christian lives. As I see it, with respect to either definition of materialism, we are talking about idol worship. We worship material objects, we want to possess more and more things, and that is idolatry. Or, we only see reality as consisting of matter, and so only matter matters, and that is idolatry, because it is like worshipping the little trinkets of wood, stone, or metal - those images of gods - but we never worship the true God behind the idol.

Either definition leads to idolatry, and idol worship is the great sin of the Old Testament. And in truth, idol worship is still the great sin of our present time. It may not be that people worship material objects, or covet material objects. Some people worship power, or sex, or fame, or any number of other things that are not "matter." But those things are still idols.

So much of our Christian lives really comes down then to removing those idols that get in our way so that we can worship God alone. If you want to discover the idol in your life, ask yourself what has control over your life? What "thing" are you powerless against? To what do you turn to when you are in most need? That is your idol, that is your materialism, so said Martin Luther. We have to begin weaning ourselves off our idols. We have to get away from all forms of materialism, those things which become as good as little trinkets of wood, stone, or metal we set up on a pedestal and worship.

I hope this helps. Thanks for your question.

Signed, *Padre*



Upcoming InBetweeners Event

Dutch Apple Theatre Event

The November InBetweeners Event is "Saturday Night Fever" at The Dutch Apple Theatre in Lancaster, PA. The date is Saturday, November 5, 2022. This is a Girls Night Only Event. Dinner is at 6:00PM and the show is at 7:30PM. Tickets are \$78.00 per person, which includes a handling fee. **Deadline to order tickets is September 6, 2022!** A signup sheet is in the Narthex or call Donna Miller. Also, any, questions, please call Donna Miller at 717-558-0660 (Home phone) OR 717-514-4692 (Cell phone).



Council Minutes

Please Note: Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Thursday, July 14, 2022

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, President Antonetta Fleming, Vice President, Brad Neil, Treasurer, Jim Lubrecht, Secretary, Jeanette Logan and Penny Zimmerman.

Members Absent: Jared Copeland and Steve Barron

At 6:08 pm the meeting was called to order by President, Antonetta Fleming.

The minutes from the Council Meeting on May 11, 2022 were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Pastor Joel and seconded by Penny. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the Financial Statements with Council. In addition, he reviewed line by line the Previous Year Comparison document. Treasurer report will be filed for audit.

Secretary's Report: Jeanette informed Council that the minutes from the Special Congregational Meeting, which took place on Sunday, May 15, 2022, were included in the June 2022 newsletter.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Report

Child Protection Policy: No Report

Fund Raising:

Egg Making - Report filed

Egg Making Financial - Report filed

GermanFest - Report filed

Mutual Ministry - No report

Property: Brad contacted Sheetz Roofing about the missing shingles. He is still working on the Stained Glass Window repair. There was discussion of the need to post our worship hours on the front door of the church in case there was confusion about our current service time. This sign should be vinyl, (waterproof) and temporary so it can be removed if necessary. Anneke will ask a her handyman Mr. David Scicchitano, to provide us with a quote for the changes needed for the larger, long, tan sign along Progress Avenue and repair the broken door on the black marquee sign out front. She will provide the quote to Council once she has received them.

Scholarship BOT: No Report

Social Ministry: No Report

Stewardship: No Report

Welcome: No Report



Worship and Music: No Report

Finance Committee: The committee members are Jared Copeland, Penny Zimmerman, Brad Neil, Jim Lubrecht, Anneke Fleming and John Zimmerman. Jared will be the new co-signer on the checks and Jim will send a letter to the bank with this request. Jim mentioned he is looking for an Assistant Treasurer. Report Filed.

Pastor's Report: Report filed.

Old Business:**Property:**

Bench in Memory of Arno Miller - The bench is proudly displayed outside of the Narthex door entrance. Jeanette will write and send a thank you note to Donna Miller. A plaque will be made for the bench.

New Business:

Fund Raising Checkbook - Jim Lubrecht made a request to transfer the money in the Fund Raising Checkbook to the Current Account Fund Checkbook. The Fund Raising Checkbook will now be closed. He mentioned that he will make a special report for the Eggs Sales, showing an itemized listing of transactions. Pastor Joel made a motion to close the Fund Raising Checkbook and transfer the balance to the Current Fund Checkbook, add a second signer and requested Jim to produce a detailed report with income and expenses for all fundraisers. This motion was seconded by Brad Neil. Motion carried.

Envelope Giving: Jim will change the Current Fund line item on the Budget Performance to read, "Envelope Giving".

Christian Education Checkbook - Jim made a Motion to close the Christian Education Checkbook and transfer the remaining balance of \$1,519.39, (a bequest of Ruth Knerr to Sunday School), to the Memorial Fund. All Sunday School expenses will be taken out of the Memorial Fund until the bequest has been depleted. Jim will provide a report of expenses paid for Sunday School. Pastor Joel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Removal of John Zimmerman as a second signer - Jim made a motion to remove John Zimmerman as a second signer of the Current Fund Checkbook and add Antonetta Fleming as a signer of the Current Fund Checkbook. Pastor Joel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

A Blessing For You - Anneke discussed a non-profit organization called, "A Blessing For You". It is an organization that helps new mothers and their children in need. The event would be held here at Our Saviour later in 2022. More details to follow.

Church in the Park - Brad discussed events in State Parks where church services are held. There is a representative that could come and speak to the congregation about their program should we find this to be helpful and of interest.

Next Council Meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2022 at 6:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm with The Lord's Prayer

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanette Logan, Council Secretary



OUR SAVIOUR
FINANCIAL REPORT
through July 31 , 2022

ENVELOPES AND PLATE	\$	82,758.29
FUND RAISING	\$	15,379.10
FELLOWSHIP HALL RENTAL	\$	100.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$	98,237.39

EXPENSE	\$	<u>117,606.99</u>
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DEFICIT	\$	<u>(19,369.60)</u>
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PNC BANK STATEMENT BALANCES
AS OF July 31, 2022

CURRENT FUND	\$	21,611.47
MEMORIAL FUND	\$	81,301.17 *

THRIVENT ACCOUNTS

	<u>8/4/2022</u>	<u>7/8/2022</u>
CURRENT FUND MUTUALS	\$ 62,256.26	\$ 57,795.84
SCHOLARSHIP MUTUALS	\$ 157,799.84	\$ 146,370.33

* \$61,000 of Memorial Fund is from the Neidich estate

\$1,519.39 of Memorial Fund is from the Ruth Knerr estate
to be used for Christian Ed expenses



Congratulations

Congratulations to Troy Schreffler, Jr., one of Our Saviour's members! In mid-July, Troy was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies. Playing Major League Baseball has been a goal Troy has pursued since he was a young boy. As part of that goal, Troy spent summers and holidays playing Travel Ball, joining special tournaments, and finally, playing ball for the University of Maryland's Division I Baseball team for the last three years.

Following his draft, Troy headed to Clearwater, FL, where he is assigned to the Threshers, one of the Phillies' Minor A teams. On game nights, Troy can be seen playing left field, center field or right field.

The draft intensified Troy's determination to work through the levels of the Minor League and to finally achieve a starting position in the line-up for the Philadelphia Phillies Major League Team.

Troy, Jr. is the son of Troy and Christine Schreffler, the twin brother to Madeline, and the older brother to Brooke. He is the grandson of George and Marcia Schreffler. We wish him the best as he continues his baseball dream and joyfully acknowledge the success he has achieved so far.



Willkommen zum Deutschen Fest Eat In or Take Out GermanFest 2022



Saturday, September 10, 2022

11:00 am until 2:00 pm

9/11 Prayer Service 10:30 am

Our Saviour Lutheran Church

420 N. Progress Ave.

Harrisburg, PA 17109

717-545-9992

Limited Menu:

Sauerbraten Meal* \$12.00

Chicken Schnitzel Meal* \$12.00

Bratwurst & Potato Salad \$7.00

Water/Soda \$1.00

Baked goods also available to purchase

Cash or check only.

***Meals include sides of red cabbage & apples and German potato salad.**

Tag Sale of new or gently used items.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Wendy Snyder	9/1	Betty Nickle	9/25
Linda Kunz	9/2	Mary Louise Shuler	9/25
Brad Neil	9/4	Hannah Zimmerman	9/25
Trinity Mummert	9/5	Alta Shadel	9/26
Connor Ecklund	9/7	Kameron Rohacek	9/27
Maria Kunz	9/10	Kris Danner	9/28
Everly Ahrens	9/12	Kevin Gibson	9/29
Tara Beachtel	9/14	Mindy Grace	9/29
Betty Hammell	9/23	Matthew DeArmitt	9/30

Calling ALL Congregation Members!

Church council is looking for you to help with a Visioning Plan. We are planning to discuss three main topics at these visioning meetings: OSL's assets, gifts, and passions; OSL's needs; and OSL's vows! We would like to hear from you on these topics as they relate to where you see Our Saviour currently and where you would like to see Our Saviour in the future.

We have set aside four different dates and times to have the meetings. They will be held at the church and we encourage you to attend a meeting in person (or all of them). However, if that does not work for you, if you call and ask Barb, a few days before a scheduled meeting, she will be able to send you a Zoom link for any of the meetings. The meetings will be held on Sunday October 2nd, immediately following worship; Thursday October 6th at 6:30 pm; Tuesday October 11th at 1:00 pm; and Saturday October 15th, at 10:00 am. Rumor is there may even be light refreshments served at the meetings!!

In order to help you be prepared for the meetings, we will have questionnaires on each topic available in the Narthex in September so that you can think about how you would answer some of the questions we will be asking at the meetings. Don't worry, you do not have to turn this in and it will not be graded! Also in the Narthex are sign-up sheets for each meeting or you can call the church office to let us know if you are planning to attend.

At the conclusion of these meetings, council plans to formulate the answers and suggestions they received and then present them to the congregation. This will help us to decide what vision(s) we see for Our Saviour Lutheran Church.



Should you have any questions, please reach out to any council member.



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2 office closed	3
4 - Pentecost 13 9:30 am - Worship GermanFest set-up after worship	5 office closed	6 Pastor out of the office	7 8 am - GermanFest prep day	8 10 am - GermanFest prep day	9 8 am - GermanFest prep day	10 11 am - GermanFest
11 - Pentecost 14 9:30 am - Worship w/Guest Preacher 10:45 am - Adult Sunday School	12 7 pm - Christian Ed in-person deadline for committee council reports	13	14 6:30 pm - Council	15	16	17
18 - Pentecost 15 9:30 am - Worship 10:45 am - Adult Sunday School newsletter deadline	19 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	20	21 2 pm - Bible Study @Manor @Oakridge 6:30 pm - joint Worship & Music	22	23	24
25 - Pentecost 16 9:30 am - Worship Ann'l Congregational meeting following worship 3 pm - Worship @Manor @Oakridge	26 6 pm - GermanFest Wrap-Up Meeting	27	28	29	30	



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Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



*Happy
Fall!*



Mission Statement

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, a caring congregation dedicated to the word of Christ, welcomes all people to worship and to grow with us as we share His love and salvation with our neighbors, our children and ourselves.

Worship

We have resumed our in-person, indoor worships! Our service starts @9:30am.

Please join us! You will still have the option of viewing our worship via live-stream. The viewing link is available on our website (address below).

Holy Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday.

Church Office

9:00 am -12:00 pm Monday through Friday

Phone: 717-545-9992

Email: ossec@comcast.net

Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.