



The Christ Messenger

Christ Lutheran Church
Vienna, West Virginia

July 2022

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Our Mission:

As Children of God, nourished by the Word, Sacrament and Fellowship of loving, forgiving, and hopeful believers—

WE are guided by the Holy Spirit to WITNESS to Christ’s saving presence in the World!

*“Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. I said to the Lord, “You are my Master! Every good thing I have comes from you.” (Psalm 16:1-2)
You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:11)*

This month we will celebrate our Independence, the freedom we enjoy as Americans. But for some time now, it seems as though we are free but have kind of freed ourselves from the confidence of everything around us. When we have little or no confidence in our government, in our leaders, and in the very things which have kept us grounded we lose our footing and are surely to fall. So I wondered about what to talk to you about, as we all struggle with this malaise that we call life. I decided to do what I always do when needing guidance and that is go to God’s Word. The scripture that was so right on was Psalm 16. You see Psalm 16 is a prayer of trust that professes confidence in God. Our God is always there with us, He is the Truth and our Way and will be our guide. The very first line is a prayer that centers us, it says, “Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge.”

King David penned these words of this psalm, but Jesus lived them. As a boy of twelve his family journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate his first Passover. They leave to go home with family and friends. But Jesus doesn’t, he goes missing. His parents were frantic and they finally find him. His mother asked why did you treat us this way? Jesus said, why were you searching for me. Didn’t you know I would be in y Father’s house. The boy grew up and later came to Jerusalem again for Passover. This time he enters the temple to find “men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.” So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area. Such devotion to His Heavenly Father. And that devotion never tapered off. Our Savior never grew disillusioned or bitter, as he grew closer to Golgotha.

So it was when wearied by the frantic pace of his ministry and the constant demands of the crowds, our Savior went off to himself to pray. He did that often. For Jesus, the words, “Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge,” was his way of life. Strengthened by the Spirit, always immersed in God’s Word, our Savior Jesus walked through this life as the epitome of a perfect trust in God the Father. Jesus confession is “I will not be shaken because the Lord is at my right hand.”

Just think of those words, I will not be shaken, so much so he could sleep peacefully in the midst of a storm. Or I will not be shake, so I can stand my ground with Satan for 40 days, because God is at my right hand. This Jesus, the One whom Psalm 16 prophesies says, “As for the saints who are on the land, they are the glorious ones in whom I delight.” This is Jesus, the One who looked up into a sycamore tree and invited Zacchaeus to Tax Collector to dinner. Just as he ate with other sinners.

This is Jesus, who wants nothing more than to feast with you and me throughout all eternity. For we are by grace, the glorious ones in who Jesus delights. We do not deserve it. There are lots of things happening in our lives that shake us up, aren’t they? Just listen to the news, not sure if what you are hearing is for real? And so your foundation is rocked. “I will

not be shaken”, that is easier said than done, when you had one of those mothers of all arguments with your friend or your spouse. Or your child says, I hate you, and you cannot figure out why. Too often, too easily we are shaken aren’t we. We fall apart at the seams, or at least crack a little.

And yet our Savior, will never leave our side. We remain his glorious ones in whom He delights. His saints are declared pure and holy through his blood. We are the ones who have received the Risen Saviors oath, “I will be with you always. I pray that during this Pentecost season that no matter how unstable we may feel, or how rocked to the core we may feel, that step by step, day by day that Jesus confession would be our own, “I Will not be shaken, because the Lord is at my right hand.”

Have a blessed July

Pastor Tom

ELDERBERRIES

Elderberries met at noon at DaVinci’s Italian Restaurant in Williamstown. The good news was that we had so many people, we had to have two tables. But they were close and we talked to each other a little bit! Also, good news was that the food was great and company outstanding! Bad news was that it was pretty noisy and hard to hear. But you have to expect that at DaVinci’s because they are always full.

Those attending were: Carolyn Stanley, Larry Armstrong, Kay Rowan, Tom Williams, Jenny and Mike Knotts, Rocky Freeman, Pastor Tom and Liz Darr, and Delores and Jerry Steege.

In case you’ve forgotten (or never knew), Elderberries was formed for the over 50’s crowd—but we’re glad to have anyone of any age join us!

Our next lunch will be at noon on Thursday, July 14, at the Fly Away Restaurant at the Wood County Airport. Please tell Delores Steege if you plan to attend. (Sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex)

Delores Steege (304) 428-2056

QUIET MOMENTS

“And so our good Lord answered to all the questions and doubts which I could raise, saying most comfortingly: I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well; and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well...And in these...words God wishes us to be enclosed in rest and in peace.”

Julian of Norwich, England (c1342-1419)

Dear Friends,

The above words were written by a famous mystic of the 15th century. She received the message during a vision from our Lord Jesus. It amazes me how appropriate these words are for us in this time of our lives. No matter what century, God is with us, walking with us, and loving us.

It is that simple and that complete. It is up to each of us to simply accept that fact into our minds and hearts and rest in our Lord Jesus. Nothing else should give us a sense of peace during these troubling times.

One of my favorite Biblical verses that I repeat every day is “Be still and know that I am God.” Being still means we know Jesus is in charge and will have the ultimate victory. It may seem that the prince of this world is in control, but in the end he **will** be destroyed.

Blessings, Liz

July Schedule at a Glance

Sundays:

July 3rd

9:30 – Outdoor Communion Service

10:45 – Indoor Communion Service

July 10th

10:00 – One service at Jackson Park under the Wesley Shelter. Picnic lunch will follow.

July 17th

10:00 – Hymnsing

Pastor Darr will be on vacation.

July 24th

9:30 – Outdoor Communion Service

10:45 – Indoor Communion Service

July 31st

9:30 – Outdoor Service of the Word

10:45 – Indoor Service of the Word

Activities:

July 14 – Elderberries at Noon
Fly Away Restaurant

We keep the following people in our prayers:

Tamar Allen; Jeff Amos; Russell Behnke; David Bills; Jerry John DiNicola; Sally Ebeling; Becky Ferguson; Pam Goots; Heather; Michael Knight; Judy Lawson; Lora Lemley; Family of Joel

McGuier; Rob Miser; Gary Miller; Sharen Nicholas; Sharon Niday; Gean Secreto; April Sowards; Tim and Lora Swarr; Caren Thomas; Donna Vincent; Brooke Wilson; Terry & Vicki Wilson; Tiffany Wilson; police and first responders; our troops; Christians and other minorities in the Middle East; people in the Ukraine and eastern Europe; pray for peace; and for our military, especially for Airman Elijah Modesitt (U.S. Airforce); Jon Shorr home from deployment; Conner Allen serving in China; families of all those who serve in the military; for all who have been diagnosed with COVID 19 and/or hospitalized for the virus, for all who have died from the virus, for all of our medical personnel and first responders who are treating patients, for all families and loved ones separated by quarantines, for people who do not have access to medical care to be treated, for folks who are unemployed and the underemployed.

Good Samaritan

Item of the Month



Chicken Broth



Birthdays

July 1- Gary Miller

July 21 – Kinsley Wagoner

Anniversaries

July 24 – Will and Laura Rogers

Council Considers Proposed Church Service/Sunday School Time Changes

The congregation council has had discussions (over the last few monthly meetings) regarding continued sparse attendance at the early service during non-summer months (September-May)

The discussion has focused on modifying the church schedule, going to one service that tries to accommodate both service preferences.

The thought is, if a change is endorsed, we'd like to consider implementing in September

Current non-summer schedule

- 1st Service - 8:30 a.m.
- Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
- 2nd Service – 10:45 a.m.

The proposed change to the Schedule would be

- Sunday School – start time either 9:00 or 9:15 a.m.
- Church Service – 10:00 or 10:15 a.m.

The council would like to consider all viewpoints and is requesting feedback over the next few weeks.

Your feedback to council would be truly appreciated.





Stewardship of our civic freedoms

As Americans celebrate the birthday of our nation, we give thanks for our civic freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, due process, a speedy trial, voting and many more. Our freedom has made us the envy of much of the world.

But as with any valuable gift, our civic freedoms can be abused, neglected or underappreciated to the point where, if we aren't careful, they hardly matter anymore.

Lutherans are guided by Martin Luther's insight that we are simultaneously called to be responsible citizens of "two kingdoms" – first, of God's spiritual realm, and second, of earthly governments of people and laws. The synergy of our "dual citizenship" directs us to be good stewards of our civic freedoms.

Freedom of speech: Yes, even hateful speech and lies are protected under our Constitution, but Christians avoid them in obedience to Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves and by the Eighth Commandment, which Luther explains in *The Small Catechism*: "We should fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations." We steward this freedom by speaking honestly and insisting others do, too.

Freedom of religion: Millions of people across the globe, including Christians, face persecution and discrimination because of their faith. We dare not take our freedom for granted, but exercise it with joy and defend the rights of others to follow their own consciences.

Freedom from illegal prosecution: Our guarantees of due process in legal, criminal and civil proceedings uphold justice and guard against government misconduct. It works imperfectly, as do all human systems, but as good stewards we fight for justice and the rights for all.

Freedom of self-governance: With its interconnected checks and balances, our three-branch system of government provides stability, accountability and flexibility for change. It's a great system, but it requires us to be informed and involved. We steward this freedom by participating in political processes, voting and insisting on honest government that works for our interests.

This month, as citizens of both God's spiritual realm and the United States of America, we renew our commitment to be good stewards of the freedoms we are privileged to have.

--Rob Blezard

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Pastor Blezard works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.