

Trinity Tribune: July 2024

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Paola, Kansas

“Means of Grace”

One term that is particular to Lutheranism is “Means of Grace.” You won’t find this term in many other denominations, but the concept is not new: how do we receive God’s blessings? What are the means by which God works in your life?

This isn’t just a Christian concern either. Every religion gives ways to get blessings from their deity, usually through your sacrifice of something. Hindu idols demand gifts of food. Some pagan gods demanded blood sacrifices of animals. It might be easy to make fun of Islam for their belief that blowing oneself up to take out infidels would result in going straight to heaven and being “blessed” with 70 virgins, but that is a sort of means of grace for them: a means by which they receive their “god’s” blessing.

Within Christianity, we might assume that most Christians agree on the means of grace, but that is not so. We agree that God is both merciful and just, and that God’s mercy is found in Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection on the third day. But how is that transmitted to you? How are the benefits of Christ’s death and resurrection given to you?

The Roman Catholics rely on the sacraments, which they number as seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. Although the Bible mentions all of these, we would point out that a number of these have no basis in Scripture for giving grace and forgiveness.

Protestants are as varied as their beliefs on any number of things. Some believe that God works through Baptism and the Lord’s Supper without agreeing with us Lutherans about the specifics. These might include the Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians. At the same time, they often refer to the sacraments as “ordinances,” which makes us think more of the law (“do this”) than the gospel (“for you”).

These churches often see the sacraments as signs or symbols of God’s work. But others turn baptism into an outward expression of the inner call—that is, something that we do to give evidence of God’s conversion within our hearts. So if baptism is not God’s work for many Protestants, then how do they receive God’s blessings? How do they know that God is working in their life? Many turn to searching their own heart for evidence of God’s grace.

The Puritans kept diaries in which you can read their spiritual struggles as they tried to discern from their heart whether they were part of the elect or not. One day they would be sure that God loved them, and a week or day later they would be absolutely despairing of any hope of salvation. There is a reason why religious revivals were popular in early America—people

wanted that experience as a sign that they were believers and that God loved them.

What do we Lutherans believe? We ask the simple question, how does God come to us? God’s continued activity from the Fall into Sin to today is one of approaching sinners in mercy with the gospel. It involves the proclamation of salvation (Word) and combining the Word with physical elements to bestow grace (Sacraments).

The Means of Grace therefore are the Word and Sacraments. The Holy Spirit uses them to create faith and trust. God has given the ministry to be stewards of these gifts (1 Cor. 4:1) and dispense them according to his command.

What happened almost 2000 years ago on the cross is brought to each of us individually by these Means of Grace. We don’t use the word “means” very much anymore, but think of it as a wheelbarrow that carries something inside of it from one place to another. The Means of Grace are the wheelbarrow by which Christ’s forgiveness is given and we are justified—declared righteous—before God.

Sacraments therefore are pure gospel by which God is truly present. God is working in our lives by these means. In baptism the recipient is buried with Christ that “we too might walk in newness of life” and be raised again on the last day (Rom 6:1–11). In Holy Communion the recipients are made participants in Christ’s atonement and receive its benefits by receiving the body and blood that Jesus sacrificed to make us at one with God.

What is grace? Grace is God’s gracious attitude to sinners on account of Christ. It is God’s response to sin by redeeming the sinful world on account of Christ. It is how God deals with us and shows us his gracious attitude. It is God’s response of love to the fallen world on account of Christ.

What is grace not? It is not, as the Roman Catholics understand it, a substance that is poured into you, and with which you must cooperate by love and good works. Luther pointed out that making grace dependent on work is not really free. Nor is grace a feeling in one’s heart. Nor is it only given to those whom God chose from the foundation of the earth, the elect. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and shows grace to all, though some refuse that grace out of unbelief.

May we as Lutherans ever hold fast and value the Means of Grace as God’s work in our lives. The “For You” part of the Gospel is made clear in Word and Sacrament as these are the means by which God shows his love, mercy, and grace for you in particular.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Woelmer

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

July 1	Emily Wolf
July 3	Brandy Allen
July 3	Molly Hermann
July 3	Karen Windler
July 3	Every Massey
July 3	Debra Karina
July 5	Joshua Bunch
July 5	Samantha Prothe
July 6	Ryan Morton
July 6	Macie Garrison
July 7	Regan Boyer
July 7	Shelly D'Amato
July 7	Kennedy Rakoski
July 7	Tamara Mitchell
July 10	Wanda Stagg
July 11	Ken Debrick
July 11	Dennis Prothe
July 12	Joshua Sombke
July 12	Steve Warner
July 13	Steve Grother
July 13	Duane Prothe
July 13	Don Warring
July 13	Lennox Wolf
July 14	Sheryl Holtz
July 14	Rayden Berry
July 15	Karen Kaiser
July 16	David Johns
July 16	Brittannie Ritch
July 17	Ann Davis
July 18	Keith Prothe
July 18	Madison Snider
July 19	Clint Kettler
July 19	Cathy Tesar
July 19	Janet England
July 20	Mallory Tharp
July 20	Norma Peckman
July 21	Dan Hieber
July 21	Chance Mueller
July 23	Lillian Kettler
July 23	Taryn Jones
July 24	Zachary Davis
July 24	Margo Cyphers
July 24	Marcie Reyelts
July 25	Shannon Fanning
July 26	Stephanie Bivins

July 27	Matthew Barnett
July 27	Denna Jones
July 27	Curtis Kettler
July 27	Marla Prothe
July 27	Miciah Carter
July 28	Ben Rakoski
July 29	Lonnie England
July 29	Barbara Herrs
July 29	Cody Weaver
July 31	Barbie Dillenbeck
July 31	Colleen Richardson

Anniversaries

July 1	Dannie & Elaine Stewart (52)
July 7	Andrew & Brianna Chapman (12)
July 8	Earl & Darleen Medlin (49)
July 15	Adam & Lorri Jenson (29)
July 18	Paul & Karen Brack (43)
July 22	Charles & Kathy Hall (45)
July 26	John & Kathy Gerken (55)
July 26	David & Carol Wray (44)
July 27	Phillip & Morgan Richards (22)
July 27	Bob & Rose Eberly (50)
July 29	Chris & Sherri Webb (35)
July 30	Justin & Emily Prothe (2)

BIBLE STUDY ON 1 PETER: "An Epistle of Hope"

Our study of the book of Judges is coming to an end. We will be looking at a very important book next: First Peter! It is a book full of vivid imagery, which Martin Luther incorporates into the Small Catechism. St. Peter points us forward in hope to the day of our Lord's return.

Join the Adult Bible Class at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays in the Heritage Room to learn more!

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Join us in the Heritage Room from 10:30-11:30 on Wednesday mornings to hear a "sneak peek" of the readings for the next Sunday.

COFFEE HOUR

Everyone is invited to stay for Coffee Hour in the Gathering Room following worship. Our thanks to those that provide snacks each Sunday. The signup sheet to provide snacks for Coffee Hour in 2024 is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

NURSING HOME SERVICES

You are invited to help Trinity provide brief worship services for nursing home residents this month. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length at each home. This month, we are scheduled for Sunday, **July 21st**. We will begin at 1:30 pm at Country Club Estates, and then go to Vintage Park around 2:15 for the second service. The residents really enjoy these services, especially singing their favorite hymns. It's great to have church members there to greet the residents and sing along. We have a few members who help but we could use your help too!

YOUTH CREATION MUSEUM TRIP

The Youth Group will be heading to Kentucky to see the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter from July 7–11. Keep them in your prayers as they learn more about God's marvelous creation of our world, as well as the veracity of the Biblical Flood. Keep them in your prayers for safe travels there and back as well.



LADIES' AID ICE CREAM SOCIAL

An Ice Cream Social is being organized by the Ladies Aid. Please mark your calendars and join us on July 14th beginning at 5 pm at the Shelter House. Funds raised will benefit our church kitchen remodel. We are looking for people to bring ice cream, cookies and cakes. If you would like to participate, please sign up on the sheet in the gathering room or you can contact Shemene, Gayle, or Phyllis.



BLOCKTOBERFEST SEPTEMBER 21

Ach du lieber! It's almost time for our eleventh annual Blocktoberfest! Held at the Shelter House on Saturday, September 21, from noon to 6:00 p.m., this year's Blocktoberfest will again feature lots of free fun activities and delicious food. Keep an eye (or ear) out for something new: Heartland Revival will be playing from 11:00 – 12:30!

And, on Sunday, September 22 we will also hold our annual "Blocktoberfest Outdoor Service" in the Shelter House at our regular worship time of 10:00 a.m. We look forward to another wunderbar year celebrating our German heritage—and having fun!

Join us Sunday, July 14th after the Ice Cream Social to continue planning for this year's festival!



We rejoice to welcome into membership at Trinity Bob and Rose Eberly, by reaffirmation of faith. We welcome you into the Lord's family!

PORTALS of PRAYER

The new quarterly issue of the devotional booklet Portals of Prayer for July thru September is available at the church, in regular size, large print, and a new "digest" size (same size as Reader's Digest). A great way to keep close to the Lord!

VOTERS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS

The quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly will be held following worship on Sunday, July 21st. In order to prepare for this meeting, the Church Council will meet Tuesday, July 16th at 7:00pm.

ADULT INSTRUCTION CLASS

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership at Trinity or in learning more about the faith, there will be a class beginning later this summer. Please speak with Pastor if you or anyone else is interested. The day of the week and meeting time will depend on the schedules of those participating.

PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to be added to a texting group for getting prayer requests, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room, or speak with Pastor or Susan Schmitt.

BIBLE JOKES

I've inherited a number of "Pastor" or Bible Jokes from my dad, and a few have been given to me by parishioners. I'm passing on a particular funny set that I received recently from one of you!

Hymns for Everyone

Dentists..... Crown Him with Many Crowns
Weathermen..... There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
ContractorsHow Firm a Foundation
Tailors..... Holy, Holy, Holy
Politicians..... Standing on the Promises
IRS AgentsI Surrender All
Gossips It Is No Secret
Electricians.....Send the Light
ShoppersIn the Sweet By and By
Realtors..... I've Got a Mansion Just Over the Hilltop
Massage Therapists He Touched Me
PilotsI'll Fly Away
Paramedics..... Revive Us Again
Judges Almost Persuaded
PsychiatristsJust a Little Talk with Jesus
Waiters.....Fill My Cup, Lord
Bakers When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
Shoe RepairersIt Is Well with My Soul
Geologists Rock of Ages
LibrariansWhispering Hope
Mail Carriers..... Deliverance Will Come
Nurses Rescue the Perishing
Telephone Operators.....Jesus on the Mainline
Fishermen Shall We Gather at the River?

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