

St. Paul's Epistle – June 2020

To Easter and Beyond

If you were to enter church, you would find that the hymnboard still says “Lent 2” (the week of March 8th) and the altar and pulpit paraments are violet/purple.

We wrapped up the Easter season on May 30th, and began the long season of Pentecost on May 31st. Up next? Trinity Sunday on June 3rd. Then? Twenty-four more Sundays in the season of Pentecost.

On Pentecost, we acknowledge the coming of the Holy Spirit (as promised by Jesus—Acts 1:4-5, 8) and the birthday of the New Testament Church—Acts 2:1-42. It is an exciting time when the Holy Spirit comes—“there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4). And as Peter spoke to the crowd that had gathered because of the special signs, we read that “there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). The Word of the Lord grew among the people—“and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). And yet, there would be persecution, false arrests, even death (stoning of Stephen—Acts 7:58). But there would be more conversions, even someone as unlikely as Saul of Tarsus, who became the great apostle Paul—Acts 9.

In our own day and time, the Holy Spirit still works to expand the number of the faithful and keep the faithful in the one true faith, “for no one can say that ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

It's no wonder we sing:

*Holy Spirit, light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away, Turn the darkness into day.*

*Let me see my Savior's face, Let me all His beauties trace;
Show those glorious truths to me, Which are only known to Thee.*

LSB 496:1-2

Pastor
Poganski

All Dried Up!

Shavuot/Pentecost 2020

Numbers 11:24-30 & John 7:37-39



On Thursday, May 28, 2020, beginning at sunset and ending at nightfall on Saturday, May 30, 2020, Jews around the world will celebrate God giving to His people, Israel, the Feast of “Weeks”, or Shavuot (shah-woo-awt). This day comes 50 days after the second night of Passover. It is no coincidence that Shavuot serves as the foundation for what the Christian Church calls Pentecost, which is celebrated on Sunday, May 31, 2020. In my biblical study of this Jewish Holiday, it seems that Shavuot has a double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in the Land of Israel (Exodus 34:22); and it also commemorates the anniversary of the day God gave the Torah to the entire nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19: 1, 10-17); although the association between the giving of the Torah and Shavuot is not explicit in the Biblical text.

Again, it is no coincidence that God as part of His plan of salvation, chose to give to His people, Israel, and to all believers in Y’shua the Messiah, on Pentecost, His Holy Spirit. That is exactly 50 days after the resurrection of Y’shua. Both Shavuot and Pentecost are historically and theologically linked with a similar theme of . . . the giving of divine knowledge. However, sometimes that divine knowledge given to us so freely by God at Shavuot and Pentecost seems so difficult to understand!

Do you ever feel like you’re running dry and burning out? You usually don’t notice it right away. That’s because life gets more hectic and stress saps you dry. Fear takes over especially at times like we currently are living in with COVID-19 and this world pandemic. Our tempers are short, the pressure to get everything done in this “new” normal increases and everything’s a blur. Suddenly, you realize that your original, child-like zeal for Y’shua has dried up. Not only can’t your faith move mountains, your faith is crawling deep into the desert of despair; and your joy is gone. You find yourself constantly questioning God or hollering at him with a hurting heart. Your marriage, your friendships and even other relationships are reeling. Even your relationship with God has dried up; your prayer life doesn’t exist, and you are burned out!

This is how God’s Chosen people felt as we read from the Torah in Numbers, chapter 11. All they did was complain, complain, complain! However, God wasn’t having any of it then and He isn’t having any of it today either. Why? Because God has provided for all of us a “Helper, a Counselor, an Advocate, in the gift of the Holy Spirit!

No doubt, God’s message at Shavuot and Pentecost is . . . **The Holy Spirit refreshes us.** It’s the Holy Spirit that refreshes our dry souls with God’s Word. That divine knowledge given to us on Shavuot and Pentecost. In this marvelous gift God re-hydrates and re-fuels us with new life through his boundless forgiveness and unbroken promises. So, here’s why we often feel so dried up in our lives, we lose our focus on the things of God, not because we don’t have the Holy Spirit in our heart, but because our connection with him has grown weak. Satan works on us, so our Bible study becomes shallow; going to church to worship becomes routine whether in person or on the internet and life in general becomes difficult!

ARE WE THERE YET?

This is getting to be quite the trek—weeks and months in the making! Are we there yet? Are you beginning to question when this shelter-in-place/isolation thing will end? Can we just get to where we are going already?

Perhaps it was a novel or unique experience for the first few weeks, a chance for creativity, a chance to try new things, but for many of us, it has become an annoyance, a burden, and a pain.

The prophet Jeremiah had to deal with something far worse, and in Lamentations, chapter three, he vows not to forget the pain and suffering he and God's people went through after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. In the midst of his despair, he clung to the hope and promise of the Lord's steadfast love and His mercies, which are new every day. Here's what he wrote:

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope; the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23)

In the frustrations and aggravation of these lonely and unprecedented days, may we be encouraged by the same promises of God. Even more so, may we know that the resurrected Christ promises never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). May we never forget these days and tell of the Lord's faithfulness through them.

As the hymnwriter Thomas Chisholm (1866-1960) penned:

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not: Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

LSB 809:1

Moses understood this as he led God's people, Israel, through the desert. We read what he says in Numbers 11:29b, from the Old Testament reading for Pentecost, "*Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!*" No doubt, God's message at Shavuot and Pentecost is . . . **The Holy Spirit empowers us.**

God's Holy Spirit empowers you through that mighty Word of God, that divine knowledge given at Shavuot and Pentecost! Y'shua explained it this way in the Gospel lesson for Pentecost from John 7:37-39, "*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*"

Just consider that first Pentecost. A bunch of unschooled, ordinary, men from Galilee of all places, preached a sermon so powerful that 3000 people were converted to Y'shua the Messiah in one day. How did it happen? Through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers us.

That's not saying it's all going to be perfect from here on out. It seems as if we have a long way to go yet before this COVID-19 will be defeated. Hang in there during these difficult days. Many people think that Christianity is a crutch, a religion of weakness for the weak-minded; however, it's a religion of power and victory! God has given us the victory in Y'shua as Messiah. **BOLDLY** sharing Him with others even in times like this is not *impossible* . . . only *different*. Shavuot and Pentecost guarantee it!

In His service . . . and yours, Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner robert.roegner@appleofhiseye.org

Bible Teacher to Israel

What Is Pentecost?

- * A holy feast that is celebrated during the third month of Sivan, 50 days AFTER the Passover
- * Sivan falls within the secular months of May and June
- * Pentecost is also referred to as the Feast of Harvest, Feast of Weeks or the Feast of the First Fruits
- * The Feast of Pentecost points to the following:
 - * *The time when Christ will pour the Holy Spirit upon his saints to prepare them for his coming during the last days*

from "The Apple of His Eye Mission Society," a recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Worship Committee Notes

In our worship, (whether in our heart, our home, on-line or assembled together again as His people), God constantly gives Himself to us. In His Word, in Holy Baptism and in the Lord's Supper, the triune God draws us to Himself as we are united to our Lord in His death and resurrection, and as we receive His forgiveness and life. (taken in part from Lutheran Witness series 1999-2000 "Oh, Come, Let Us Worship Him").

We are so very blessed to worship our Lord and Savior:

Sunday, June 7th is The Holy Trinity.

Our Lessons: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Acts 2:14a, 22-36 and Matthew 28:16-20

Hymns from LSB: "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" (940); "Holy, Holy, Holy" (507); "All Glory Be to God on High" (947); "We All Believe in One True God" (953) and "Glory Be to God the Father" (506)

The Sermon: "God in Three Persons". (Topical)

Sunday, June 14th is the Second Sunday after Pentecost.

Our Lessons: Exodus 19:2-8; Romans 5:6-15 and Matthew 9:35-10:8

Hymns: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (790); "Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion" (559); "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying" (826); "Thy Body, Given For Me, O Savior" (619) and "Spread the Reign of God the Lord" (830).

The Sermon: "The Compassion of Jesus" based on the Gospel reading from Matthew 9.

Sunday, June 21st is the Third Sunday after Pentecost

Our Lessons: Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:5a, 21-33.

Hymns: "Word of God, Come Down on Earth" (545); "Herald, Sound the Note of Judgment" (511); "If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee" (750); "How Wide the Love of Christ" (535); "O God of Light" (836).

The Sermon: "Jeremiah: Lonely and Bitter" based on the Old Testament reading from Jeremiah.

Sunday, June 28th is the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Our Lessons: Jeremiah 28:5-9; Romans 7:1-13; Matthew 10:34-42.

Hymns: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (426); "The Son of God Goes Forth to War" (661); "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus" (685); "Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray" (623); "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (657).

The Sermon: "When the Sword Comes" based on the Gospel reading from Matthew 10.

We are One in the Spirit,

Karen Broach, Worship Committee Member

Our Next Step(s) toward Having In-person Worship

In Jesus' High Priestly Prayer (John 17) He prayed for the Father to glorify His Son as Jesus completed the saving work of dying and rising for our Salvation. Jesus prayed for His disciples to know and proclaim Him in faith and unity. Jesus also prayed for All Believers, for us. "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you"(verse 20b-21a).

Let us respect the needs of one another as we look to resuming our corporate worship services. Let us reflect the love that our Father has shared with us in care for one another.

Consider:

- what we don't know about a virus that is unpredictable and has caused over 100,000 deaths in our country alone.
- following guidelines provided by our government and local authorities and applying them to the specific needs of St. Paul Lutheran Church.
- those in our home, community and church who have a different immunity and cannot handle illness the same as we may be able to.
- the special needs, unique demographics of our congregation.
- preparations that our necessary to support our members and friends in worship.
- taking precautions to protect one another and ourselves (wearing masks, physical distancing, forgoing handshakes, modifying our worship service, etc.)

+++++

Mission of the Month

The mission of the month for June is Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM), helping congregations help members with special educational needs to learn about the Savior. They have been in existence since 1873. To learn more, please go to their website at lsem.org. If you would like to give a gift, please use your designated offering envelope which states on it "Designated Gift for June." You may also give an earmarked gift to "LSEM." [Note: Please make any checks out to "St. Paul" as we will send them one check at the end of the month--thanks!