

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church
1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756

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Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM
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June – July 2017

Of the Prayer Service, Conscience, and Clerical Collars

Thanks to all who came out for the Prayer Service at the Planned Parenthood clinic. I was asked after if I was disappointed at the turn out. You'll recall in the newsletter announcing this I said I would be happy if 2 or 3 were there. There were several times that I didn't count. I don't make a habit out of counting that which comes as a gift from God. I was thankful that Trinity allowed me to host it in her name. I could have hosted as a pastor without your name, but I am thankful Trinity stood publicly for life.

At my first parish, two pastors from a small confessional Lutheran denomination, having read a conservative article by me, came to beat my conscience up about staying in the Missouri Synod. They were older than I and relentless. I spoke to another pastor in the Missouri Synod about this. He told me, "You'll find that once a pastor makes up his mind to leave the Synod, even though it took him years to come to that conclusion, he will expect you to come to that conclusion instantly." I've found this to be true about many conscience things. The real kicker here is that years later when I was serving a parish in Detroit I ran into one of those pastors at the Michigan District convention. He was back in the Missouri Synod. I asked him about it and he shrugged and said, "I had to pay my bills."

What does that have to do with the prayer service? While at seminary

when Roe v Wade was only 6 years old, said the one place fitting for a pastor in a clerical collar to be arrested was at a protest against abortion. It took me over 30 years to come to the conclusion that I should take a public stand on behalf of the unborn. It took 6 years to start having Life Sunday service; it took me 7 years to write public letters to the editor. And 10 years, before having a public display and prayer service at my own church. I am a slow bloomer. Therefore, I don't expect anyone to come to a position that took me decades and decades to arrive it. What really put me over the edge is when I saw the post-election marches on behalf of the "right" to kill babies in the womb. I couldn't remain part of what some think is the silent majority even if I really believe we are in the minority.

Someone asked me how the prayer service went. Three things: One, I used the prayer service I conducted in Louisiana at our mock cemetery. I remember it taking longer. Two, I find it impossible to pray silently more than 10 or so minutes. Aesthetic monks have for centuries warned about the dangers of dead zones in silent prayers. I notice the people who organize the 40 Days for Life speak on their web page about not only going there to pray but to keep vigil. This is what I'm going to advocate we do. I would like to enlist volunteers to keep vigil for maybe as little as 15 minutes. Three, there were more cat-calls and shouts, this time than when I was out there without a clerical collar, cassock, crucifix, and a group. The elder holding the crucifix thinks that was the lightning rod that drew the ire.

Marquart. He always advocated that pastors wear clerical collars because this was a public testimony that Christ was still in the world. I didn't always. In fact, for the first 7 years I only wore one on Sundays or when performing weddings and funerals. Then I was coming out of a church where I had taken part in a Saturday afternoon wedding. Wearing a clerical collar, I was walking down the stairs of the church. Three teens were passing on the other side of road about 50 yards away. They shouted, "Satan rules," and thrust a fist in the air. I thought if a clerical collar bothers Satan that much, I should wear one more. And I have.

Kids and Church Rev. William Holzer, Grace Lutheran, Brenham, Texas

(PRH – This was the Pastor's Page for their April 2017 newsletter. I have given it the title "Kids and Church." I thought it treats a touchy subject truthfully. My connection to Pastor Holzer, other than both being confessional pastors, is that he graduated in 1976 from New Mexico Military Institute and I graduated in 1977.)

Ecclesiastes 1:1 "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. ²"Vanity^[a] of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." ³What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun?

12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

I have been at Grace now for 20 years. I arrived with a wife and four

children; the youngest was 3 months old. I am an empty nester and that little baby has a 11 month old of her own. A lot happens in 20 years.

When I arrived in 1997 we had a membership (on paper) of 912 baptized and 769 confirmed. That's 143 children under 14. Now we have 628 baptized and 552 confirmed. That's 76 children under 14. You could just about say half and half. Average worship attendance went from 421 to 260, a drop of 161 souls. That's 80 per service. The sanctuary wasn't overcrowded when I arrived and now there are some who are calling for us to go to one service a Sunday.

We have said our temporal good-byes to 222 adult members but not one child. Yet we have a membership which rosters half the number of children that we had in 1997. What could have caused that I wonder? If you add back in the number called to glory with our current membership, we would be 850 strong but we would still only have half the children we had. Could barren wombs equal a barren sanctuary?

Those who know me and listen to me know that I have begun to remark, "You can't have too many children." Whether you accept that simple statement as true or not, it can't be refuted. Even a blind man should be able to see the truth in it.

Our families have become like failed football teams: three and out. Or perhaps two and out if one's a girl and the other a boy. We are not alone in this; the whole Missouri Synod shares our affliction.

Those are the only statistics that really matter for our congregation. The church buildings won't survive into the next world, the world to come. Neither will any of the wonderful things that we have laid up for the glory of God. They won't be in heaven with us.

But children and grandchildren might be, by the grace of God. Perhaps we are missing the big picture?

Perhaps we will gain sight of it again in the next 20 years?

Next we must examine the winning and losing of souls. That would be reflected in the counts of the number of adult and child professions of faith: 196. This number verses the number of adults and children who were removed through transfer to churches that do not share our confession of faith or were removed. Those who were removed were also removed by their own request, by the request of the voters or simply those who left our area and failed to keep contact with the congregation. The number would also include those excommunicated by the voters, but that number over the last 20 years is zero. The total number of souls that were lost is 457.

A brief refresher in the doctrine of the Church is necessary at this point. We believe and confess in our Creeds the universal (catholic) Christian Church. We confess what we believe and that means that the Christian Church is an article of faith. Hebrews 11 teaches us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Even though we gather every Sunday for worship we still fail to see the true Church with earthly eyes. Therefore we continue to confess that we believe that there are true Christians in other denominations where the Holy Scriptures are present through which the Holy Spirit can create and sustain faith where and when it pleases God.

Therefore we do not automatically consign those who leave our fellowship to the flames of hell. Only an excommunicated individual would necessarily fall into that category, his or her excommunication being a testimony that he or she has rejected the Gospel and stands condemned. That said, we also don't diminish and ignore the threat of false doctrine, no matter how little of a deviation from the pure word of God it seems.

To depart from God's pure word is like taking poison a little at a time thinking you'll build up an immunity to poison. False doctrine doesn't work that way. By its very nature, false doctrine wars

against the Holy Spirit and trust in God's pure word, seeking to put both to death. False doctrine is the work of the devil and must never be tolerated in God's Holy Church. The history of the children of Israel, written in the Old Testament, gives us certainty about the results of the impure mixing with the pure Word of God. Lord, preserve us from a slow death through the perversion of Your Truth.

The Church is not built and does not fall based on statistics. The Church is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. He is the Way and the Truth and the Life. Not one comes to the Father apart from Jesus Christ.

The last point, one that has remained since the time I first arrived, is the issue of the grown children of the congregation. I, myself, now have six grown children: two married and four single. All but one has left home and he is in his final year of college. So, this is an issue that lays heavily on my own heart and mind.

There has been a custom in the congregation to give the greatest grace to its biological children. I understand this. In fact, see the first part of this article. We greatly desire both the temporal and eternal welfare of the little ones whom God has given us.

Our mission is to be both faithful to His Word and to be bold in the power of the Spirit to proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ until He comes again in glory or He calls us to Himself from this vale of tears. This we have done and this we must continue to do. We shall sow the seed of the Word and the Holy Spirit will give it growth according to His good and gracious will.

The final portion of this article addresses a situation that has persisted for many years, even before I arrived as associate pastor. That is the situation caused by our children growing up and leaving the Brenham area. Some went off to college, some to serve our nation in the military, and some just left to find greener pastures and more lucra-

tive careers. They departed the Brenham area but never transferred their church memberships to reflect their new situations.

There is always and will always be a deep concern of parents for their children and grandchildren. We should expect no less. God has given us children. He has given our children of their own. Throughout all the struggles we have faced raising our own children, we should remember to look forward to the blessing of grandchildren.

Yet we fail our children when we fail to eject them from the nest. After they have left our care and established themselves in a new community, with their own home and a job, they need to establish themselves as part of an active and faithful church family. Perhaps we have forgotten that when they become communicant members of the congregation, they are promising to be faithful Christians in their own right. Now we hardly expect them to be fully grown and mature individuals at age 14. And we know they have a lot of growing up to do.

But part of that growing up is our insisting that they be responsible for their spiritual welfare just as we insist that they be responsible in all the other areas of their lives. We expect no less of them. Sometimes they must be prodded and encouraged to live up to the commitments they made when they promised their faithfulness at the time of their confirmation. But we dare not look the other way as they neglect their own spiritual welfare. If they are not regularly attending worship where they live and seeking to find and maintain membership in a congregation where they live, they have abandoned their commitment to the Lord. They know it. And we should recognize that fact.

Keeping adult children (an oxymoron if there ever was one) on our rolls to satisfy some fantasy of our own does them no good. Just as keeping adults on the congregation's rolls who

have long ago abandoned the faith does them no good. We must confront them with the reality of their spiritual condition and remove them from our membership rolls. We need to start treating adults like adults, which means being honest with them about the truth of their spiritual condition so that we might bring them to repentance and eternal life.

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you all though the remainder of your years.

Pastor Holzer

A Boat with Billowed Sail

Whether it's Peter, Paul, and Mary's 1963 "Puff the Magic Dragon," or the 1977 – rather annoying – song by Styx "Come Sail Away" or the 1980 – less annoying – song by Christopher Cross "Sail Away", images of the sea captivate. But this is not about the sea but about a synod.

A church denomination of any size is like a British Man of War. There are numerous sails in the rigging designed to catch the slightest hint of a wind. You just think you know what the doldrums are, and if you don't look it up, you'll not understand why they put as many sails as they could in the air.

A church denomination, either intentionally or unintentionally, has many sails unfurled that can catch every gust, breeze, or gale of the spirit of the age. The Synod's health plans, retirement plans, her bank (Church Extension Fund) and now her credit union, as well as her providing military chaplains and immigration and refugee services are a few of the many sails LCMS, Inc. has aloft.

You saw her catch the wind when LCMS headquarters glommed on to the ice bucket challenge. You feel the huff and puff of the spirit of the age when St. Louis seminary encourages your church to have a "watch party" for their Call service. (Why not call it Draft Day and billow with the winds

coming off the NFL draft?) You heard her catch a gale when then President Kieschnick being interviewed after 9/11 was caught off guard by the interviewer asking him if he could say that all those dying in the attack were going to heaven, and if he couldn't say that how was he different than the Muslims who attacked us? The Synod's sails billow with the fresh winds of the spirit of the age every time we amend, edit, or color our way of thinking, speaking, or doing, so as to not offend the age.

An individual pastor or church really doesn't have that many sails in the air. I'm a dingy with one sail. It's easy for me *not* to catch the spirit of this age as it blows about me. In an emergency, I can just lower my one sail. Church bodies have many sails to lower and they can't, won't, or don't lower them quickly.

Lutheranism has historically been divided by those who would fill their sails with the American spirit, and those who confessed against it. The LCMS – and before her the ALC – tries to stand between the two positions. Historically, all you can say taking this position will get you is blown away. The moderate ALC was blown right into the far left LCA which really had been blown into the spirit of the age by the tropical force winds radiating from the General Synod and her Definite Platform of 1855: a true hurricane of a blow that the Good Ship LCMS weathered.

Read the book *Uncertain Saints*. This 1975 book outlines the moderating influence of the Lutheran Layman's League from its earliest beginnings circa 1917, and describes how our sails get set to catch the spirit of the age: Laymen increasingly find our theology at odds with the society around them. In time, some older pastors see that our ship is lagging behind without the spirit of the age billowing our sails. Then new leaders

arise who approach things from a different perspective. “The result was usually a theology or a ‘theologization’ depending on one’s perspective, of moderate lay practice. In the twentieth century, this happened repeatedly on one question after another in lay life” (Graebner, Alan, 117-118).

After the syncretistic, unionistic prayer service in Yankee Stadium, after Rev. Wallace Schultz was pitched overboard off Lutheran Hour Ministries for doing his job as second vice president, I called their headquarters and asked them about this. Here’s what their official spokesman said to me: “We have no official position on that prayer service.” Can you see the sails billowing?

It is going to take incredible faithfulness, integrity, and courage for the LCMS to drop her sails and risk languishing in the doldrums as the spirit of our age passes by. Individuals even at the synodical level may have all three, but the institution does not. She is giving every indication that her sails are fully unfurled: her desire to open (again) an office in the nation’s capital, her allowing the taking of the name Lutheran off of churches and universities. She is following the “Lutheran” organizations who have set forth full sail already. Thrivent for Lutherans is now Thrivent; Lutheran Social Services of the South is now Upbring.

Lincoln said that public sentiment is everything. “With public sentiment, nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed” (*Speaking of Homosexuality*, 89). Everyone knows the public sentiment on climate change, recycling, women, and LGBTQ issues. If the LCMS completes her journey to that egalitarian land where women are ordained, she will quickly fall to this issue too. She has already passed the way-

points of women’s suffrage, girl acolytes, women ushers, readers, and communion assistants. I don’t see how any denomination who has caught all these winds of this age can fail to be driven by them unto the rocks of women’s ordination and LGBTQ-ism. My personal opinion is that this will happen at the latest in the lifetime of the generation below the Baby Boomers.

In the song, Puff the dragon ceases to go with Jackie Paper on a boat with billowed sail because Jackie no longer believes in him. Let us *not* stop believing in the dragon, the serpent, the old evil foe. He exists and it is his breath you feel in the spirit of the age.

Having Your Cake and Eating It Too

It took me many years to understand what my mom meant by this oft repeated expression of hers. I never asked and she never told. This was how my non-home schooling mom “schooled” me.

The article below suggests some resources to deal with un-Biblical evolution embraced by secular education and society. I can’t vouch for them. I can only say that the editor of World Magazine is a gifted scholar but also thoroughly Reformed (think Protestant).

I also caution you that one or more resource might mention the latest attempt to have your cake and eat it too. You can embrace your Bible and have modern geology, dating, and an old earth. Yes, the days in Genesis were 24 hours in length but they were separated by long, long periods. This is what is known by evolutionists as punctuated equilibrium. (Google it.)

The problem with this is two-fold. First, sticking with the Genesis record you have vegetation on earth surviving for thousands, millions, billions of years without the sun. Second, if you go down this path, of accommodating what science supposedly knows in this area, you will feel all the more pressure to do so in other Biblical areas. And what does science know about the existence of an-

gels, bread being Body, wine being Blood, or the dead not being dead?

You can’t have your cake and eat it too. Try and you, in some form or fashion, are inevitably the one who gets eaten.

Design for Students

Answers in Genesis publishes many books for children, including Ken Ham’s *Dinosaurs of Eden* (Master Books, new edition, 2015) and *Ruth Carter’s I Really, Really, Really Want to Learn About Ape-Men* (AIG, 2015).

Two short ICR books written by Randy Guliuzza and suitable for Christian high-school or college use – *Made In His Image: Examining the Complexities of the Human Body* (2009) and *Clearly Seen: Constructing Solid Arguments for Design* (2012) – zestfully show how living creatures proclaim God’s engineering genius. The first gives lots of specific detail on how God made us to do amazing things, including throwing a baseball at more than 90 miles per hour. (Well, some of us.) The second, also well-written, shows how “the whole universe...continually broadcasts the evidence of God’s handiwork.”

Discovering Intelligent Design: A Journey Into the Scientific Evidence (2013), by Gary Kemper, Hallie Kemper, and Casey Luskin, is Discovery’s entry into the home school and private school market. (Discovery, in conjunction with Illustra Media, also puts out excellent videos.) One section on cosmic design examines Big Bang cosmology, fine-tuning of the universe and planet Earth, and materialist attempts to explain fine-tuning. A section on the complexity of life explains the importance of biological information, describes “irreducible complexity” and debunks “junk DNA” talk. The text also skewers Darwinist frauds, including highly publicized “transitional forms,” and shows the abrupt appearance of new organisms in the fossil record.

Marvin Olasky

Theism in Unscriptural Forms.

There are men who are constrained to admit the being of God, who depart from the Scriptural doctrine as to his relation to the world. According to some, God created matter and endowed it with certain properties, and then left it to itself to work out, without any interference or control on his part, all possible results. According to others, He created not only matter, but life, or living germs, one or more, from which without any divine intervention all living organisms have been developed. Others, again, refer not only matter and life, but mind also to the act of the Creator; but with creation his agency ceases. He has no more to do with the world, than a ship-builder has with the ship he has constructed, when it is launched and far off upon the ocean. According to all these views a creator is a mere *Deus ex machina*, an assumption to account for the origin of the universe.

Another general view of God's relation to the world goes to the opposite extreme. Instead of God doing nothing, He does everything. Second causes have no efficiency. The laws of nature are said to be the uniform modes of divine operation. Gravitation does not flow from [Pg 23] the nature of matter, but is a mode of God's uniform efficiency. What are called chemical affinities are not due to anything in different kinds of matter, but God always acts in one way in connection with an acid, and in another way in connection with an alkali. If a man places a particle of salt or sugar on his tongue, the sensation which he

experiences is not to be referred to the salt or sugar, but to God's agency. When this theory is extended, as it generally is by its advocates, from the external to the internal world, the universe of matter and mind, with all their phenomena, is a constant effect of the omnipresent activity of God. The minds of some men, as remarked above, are so constituted that they can pass from the theory that God does nothing, to the doctrine that He does everything, without seeing the difference. Mr. Russel Wallace, the companion and peer of Mr. Darwin, devotes a large part of his book on "Natural Selection," to prove that the organs of plants and animals are formed by blind physical causes. Toward the close of the volume he teaches that there are no such causes. He asks the question, What is Matter? and answers, Nothing. We know, he says, nothing but force; and as the only force of which we have any [Pg 24] immediate knowledge is mind-force, the inference is "that the whole universe is not merely dependent on, but actually is, the will of higher intelligences, or of one Supreme Intelligence." [5] This is a transition from virtual materialism to idealistic pantheism. The effect of this admission on the part of Mr. Wallace on the theory of natural selection, is what an explosion of its boiler would be to a steamer in mid-ocean, which should blow out its deck, sides, and bottom. Nothing would remain above water.

The Duke of Argyll seems at times inclined to lapse into the same doctrine. "Science," he says, "in the modern doctrine of conservation of energy and the convertibility of forces, is already getting a firm hold of the idea, that all kinds of force are but forms of manifestations of one central force issuing from some one fountain-head of power. Sir John Herschel has not hesitated to say, 'that it is but reasonable to regard the force of

gravitation as the direct or indirect result of a consciousness or will existing somewhere.' And even if we cannot certainly identify force in all its forms with the direct energies of the one Omnipresent and [Pg 25] All-pervading Will, it is at least in the highest degree unphilosophical to assert the contrary,—to think or to speak, as if the forces of nature were either independent of, or even separate from the Creator's power." [6] The Duke, however, in the general tenor of his book, does not differ from the common doctrine, except in one point. He does not deny the efficiency of physical causes, or resolve them all into the efficiency of God; but he teaches that God, in this world at least, never acts except through those causes. He applies this doctrine even to miracles, which he regards as effects produced by second causes of which we are ignorant, that is, by some higher law of nature. The Scriptures, however, teach that God is not thus bound; that He operates through second causes, with them, or without them, as He sees fit. It is a purely arbitrary assumption, that when Christ raised the dead, healed the lepers, or gave sight to the blind, any second cause intervened between the effect and the efficiency of his will. What physical law, or uniformly acting force, operated to make the axe float at the command of the prophet? or, in [Pg 26] that greatest of all miracles, the original creation of the world.

WHAT IS DARWINISM? (pages 23-26)

**BY CHARLES HODGE,
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June 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Voters Meeting 7 PM	7:15 Romans			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
		PASTOR				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		ON				
25	26	27	28	29	30	
		VACATION				

July 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			7:15 Romans			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			7:15 Romans			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
			7:15 Romans			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	7:15 Romans			
30	31					