



# Pastor's Page



Zion Lutheran  
Church  
110 East Grand Avenue  
Chippewa Falls, WI  
54729

September  
2013

Website:

[www.cfzionlutheran.com](http://www.cfzionlutheran.com)

## Home Devotions

If you are like me, when you hear the words *home devotions*, you start feeling guilty. You reflect on the past--the many times that you were too busy with the cares of this world to hear God's Word in the home and return thanksgiving to the Lord. Like me, you know that being a Christian is a daily vocation (calling) and that it is NOT only a one hour Sunday activity--like taking God off the shelf and then putting Him back for the rest of the week. Yes, God wants and invites us to read, hear, and study His Word and pray daily throughout our lives—for our eternal good. Home devotions are not something we do for God—He doesn't need our prayers for example. No, they are solely and *souly* for our benefit. And, no matter the frequency, the discipline, and devotion we apply to doing home devotions—under the Law—we will always fail and should feel accused. As to say, what is worse than feeling guilty for failing to do home devotions is feeling pride that you have done them well enough and that you have earned God's favor thereby. As sinners, we all fall into both camps. We are lazy and don't feel guilty. We are lazy and do feel guilty for neglecting God's Word and prayer; other times, we take pride that we have read our Bible, and thank God we are not like other people. Thankfully, the primary message of God to us is the forgiveness of all our sins for the sake of Jesus.

In our place, Jesus always held God's Word sacred and gladly heard and learned It. Jesus always prayed, praised, and gave thanks. Jesus kept ALL of God's Law for us. He then died on the cross for all of our sins—the sins of laziness, the sin of not caring, the sin of being too busy with the wrong priorities and the sin of failing to pray and say thanks. In Baptism, Jesus' righteousness covers us, and the blood He shed for our sins washes us clean and gives us a good conscience. We have been set free, with heaven as our home, apart from home devotions.

And, the new man that God has raised in Baptism loves God's Word and prayer. However, as we know, our old man—that is, the sinful flesh—still clings to us and tries to keep us from doing the things we want to do, i.e. home devotions. This is the life long struggle that we all live until the Lord returns or takes us home. And, it is by His Word alone—Sunday morning and daily—that our Lord sustains our faith and gives us the power from the Gospel to fight the fight and finish the race.

The other aspect of home devotions is that if you were never taught how to do them—you don't know where to begin. In the near future I will be teaching in our Sunday morning Bible class how to have home devotions. I also plan to set aside Sunday afternoons (after lunch) starting now, for as long as needed, to make home visits to help model home devotions for you and/or your family. I want to do everything I can to help you in your Christian lives, because, as we know, the world is evil and always trying to lead us astray—not to mention the devil and our flesh. Please talk with me to set up these very important visits. They won't take long—maybe 15min.

May He Who began a good work in you carry it to completion!

Pastor

## First Things First

[www.ancelc.net](http://www.ancelc.net)

Since the [ACELC](#) began its work of encouraging our Synod to honestly address the theological and practical errors that sadly have divided our fellowship, we've discovered that many have been more than willing to criticize our efforts. The one, overriding criticism that seems to surface most often is that the ACELC is “disturbing the peace” of our synodical institution by pointing out the problems we must resolve if our Synod is to be truly united.

It is odd, indeed, to be accused of causing divisions when we are, in fact, seeking only unity. It has been our experience that when issues such as closed communion, contemporary worship, or any of the other [10 areas identified by the ACELC as problematic](#) are brought up, that a common response has been to call us “trouble-makers,” “disturbers of the peace,” or “divisive.” It appears that the only acceptable kind of “peace” proposed by those who support variances of doctrine and practice in the Synod is that we in the ACELC simply leave well enough alone, and cease all criticism and any attempts to establish a meaningful dialog. This (in their estimation, I suspect) is the only way bring about peace to the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Of course, we do not believe this to be true at all, for the reality is that agreeing to disagree is no agreement at all.

Our Synod was roundly critical of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) when they used a model known as “Reconciled Diversity” to achieve “unity” between church bodies of widely divergent doctrine and practice. In its simplest form, “Reconciled Diversity” is a model for church fellowship that seeks to find whatever common doctrines may exist between those church bodies who are attempting to establish pulpit and altar fellowship with one another. It simply declares that those issues which cannot be reconciled to be “non-divisive.” By using this model the ELCA is able to welcome with open arms both pastors and communicants to each church's communion rails and pulpits (including members and pastors of the United Methodist Church; Presbyterian Church, USA; United Church of Christ; Reformed Church of America; Moravian Church; and Episcopal Church, USA).

While our Synod was right in criticizing the ELCA for this method of “establishing” church fellowship, the truth of the matter is that we are doing the exact same thing in our own church body. We are also seeking the lowest common denominator in our doctrine and practice when we insist on agreeing to disagree on issues we are not able to agree on. In effect, the LCMS is also practicing “Reconciled Diversity!” It would appear that now the greatest “sin” a person can commit in our Synod is “rocking the boat” and “disturbing the Synod” with the truth! Maintaining “peace” within the institution of the Synod now appears to be of paramount importance, rather than making sure our doctrine and practice conform to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. May God forgive us for this!

The ACELC seeks to be a voice for the truth of God's Word and its correct exposition, namely, our Lutheran Confessions. We in the ACELC actually believe God's Word speaks clearly concerning each and every area of concern outlined in our original "[Letter of Fraternal Admonition](#)" (which was sent to every congregation of the Synod in July of 2010). We support all efforts to achieve a resolution to each and every one of the errors identified in this document, and we are foolish enough to think God can actually accomplish that among us! How can we have such confidence? Because we believe God's Word can and will change hearts and conform them to His truth.

So, "first things first" means that maintaining the peace of the institution called the Missouri Synod must take a back seat to the clear teaching of God's Word. "First things first" means that we must stick with what Holy Scripture says, and if doing that causes a disturbance in the Synod, then so be it! "First things first" means that the truth of God is more important than maintaining an illusion of peace which is no peace at all. If we in the Synod are willing to put "first things first," then (under God's grace), we are confident He will bring about a peace in our Synod that is acceptable in His sight.

Rev. Richard A. Bolland  
Assistant Pastor - Emeritus  
Gloria Christi Lutheran Church  
Greeley, Colorado

If you would like to assist the ACELC in this effort you may encourage your congregation to [join as a full Member of the ACELC](#). As an individual you may join as an [Associate Member](#). You may also support our work by making a [donation online](#). Or, if none of those options work for you, we would like to ask that you remember our efforts in your prayers – that all we do would be pleasing to God and beneficial for the building of up His kingdom of grace.

See more at: <http://acelc.net/#sthash.uW8X56Oa.dpuf>

## CCM opinion 11-2589 and the ACELC

***“The sum of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous rules endures forever.” Psalm 119:160***

On July 15, 2010, the Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations (ACELC) mailed a "[Letter of Fraternal Admonition](#)" to every congregation in the LCMS. At that time the ACELC was not an organized group, but merely a collection of individuals concerned about their church, and a number of matters of doctrine and practice that seemed to be contrary to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions. Many responded favorably to

that letter and several months later (March, 2011) the ACELC was officially formed.

On April 4, 2011, a pastor in the LCMS was concerned that someone actually wrote a letter to the congregations of the LCMS pointing out perceived errors of doctrine and practice, and shared that concern with the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). In September of 2011, the CCM issued opinion number 11-2589 (reproduced in the 2013 Convention Workbook, p. 288-297).

Please note that at ***no time*** did the CCM ever contact anyone in the ACELC to ask any questions or clarify any issues, and because of that made many false assumptions. It is also clear that the CCM did not read the ACELC documents ([\*readily available on our website\*](#)), which would have cleared up many of their false assumptions. We do not know the name of the Pastor who asked for this opinion and we have not been given a copy of the original letter of concern. We were also not notified that someone had asked for a CCM opinion regarding the ACELC, or even of the fact that an opinion had been given. It was only many months after the opinion was rendered that someone happened across it and made the ACELC Board of Directors aware of its existence.

There have been many voices in the LCMS that have called for the CCM to be revamped or even abolished. We do not wish to enter into those discussions at this time. We would, however, like to set the record straight. Since CCM Opinion 11-2589 simply does not apply to the ACELC, we must respectfully but wholeheartedly reject it. You may find [\*\*\*CCM opinion 11-2589\*\*\*](#) (on page #170) and the [\*\*\*ACELC response\*\*\*](#) by clicking on these links.

If you have any questions regarding this CCM opinion or the ACELC response, please do not hesitate to ask. We would also like to take this opportunity to ask you to [\*visit our website\*](#) and examine our many documents and papers. From the beginning, we in the ACELC have worked hard to do everything in a very open and transparent manner. We sincerely desire your feedback and ask for your prayerful consideration and support. We also pray for God's continued blessings upon the LCMS that we would one day be truly united in Christ, and that our unity would be truly expressed in word and deed.

In Christ,  
Rev. Clint K. Poppe  
Chairman, ACELC

P.S. While we have your attention we would also like to take this opportunity to announce the Fourth Annual ACELC "Free Conference" and Business Meeting, which is scheduled for February 25-27, 2014, at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The topic will be announced shortly, but we wanted you to be able to mark the date on your calendar now.

## Is or Isn't it Enough?

Posted on [August 5, 2013](#) by [Rev. Paul R. Harris](#) Trinity Lutheran, Austin, TX

<http://blog.trinityaustin.com/2013/08/05/is-or-isn%E2%80%99t-it-enough/#more-780>

Thirty years ago a Texas District official said in the District newsletter that some Ivory Tower theologians believe all that you have to do is preach the Gospel purely and administer the sacraments rightly and the church will grow. He was talking about Fort Wayne Seminary professors at the time. Now thirty years later we hear the same from a St. Louis Seminary professor.

Profession Ben Haupt says in a review of *Luther's Works*, Vol. 59, "Some seem to argue, 'All we have to do is preach God's word from the pulpit and rightly administer the sacraments in the sanctuary, and the gospel will spread to all nations'" (*Concordia Journal*, Summer 2013, 251). Haupt goes on to say that Luther was in favor of using a variety of forms. I think Haupt is arguing in favor of embracing technology to spread the Gospel. The Texas District official was arguing in favor of the then avant-garde Church Growth principles which are now the old hat of contemporary worship.

The Texas District's public embracing of church growth has not panned out though pastors like me are usually blamed for the poor results. It's pastors like me who are nothing but maintenance ministers teaching from the catechism, worshipping from a hymnal, preaching Law and Gospel, and confessing that it is not enough to speak the truth you also must reject the error (i.e. practice closed Communion) that are stifling church growth. The truth is there are less maintenance ministers in Texas than there are avant-garde ones. Yet for the 20 years I ran the numbers (1983-2003) the State of Texas grew 30% and the District 7%. (During this time please note that the holy Christian Church grew exactly as Her Lord would have her.)

Is the Gospel purely preached and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution enough or not to grow the Church into all nations? If you say it's not, then you are bringing in something else to the article of justification and whatever it is doesn't belong there and is a poison to the article.

I'm sure Noah was depressed when only 8 from a world of people only boarded the ark after 120 years of preaching. I'm sure righteous Lot was discouraged when only 3 came away in faith from Sodom and Gomorrah. I'm sure the 10 apostles despaired when a week's worth of their Law and Gospel preaching to Thomas didn't bring him to faith.

Nowhere do you find Noah, Lot, or the apostles being criticized for relying on only Word and Sacrament. Thirty years ago a District official was bold enough to criticize unnamed seminary professors for that, and now a seminary professor is so emboldened to criticize the nameless "some." The one thing they have in common is neither of them have Word and Sacrament ministry entrusted to them. One dealt with them administratively; the other deals with them academically. In neither case do they see as many struck or burned ([Jeremiah 23: 29](#)) as we in Word and Sacrament ministry do. We may not see many, but those we do see leave no doubt the hammer is heavy enough and the fire hot enough.

Fellow friends of Zion:

The following letter is from Kristin Matasovsky, a dedicated LCMS young lady that Herman and I had the privilege of watching grow up at St. John's Lutheran in Storm Lake, Iowa. Our Evangelism committee has sent a one time donation to her. Herm and I ask that you keep her in your prayers and if you wish to support her work in South Africa checks can be mailed to:

Mission Central – LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E 16

Mapelton, Iowa 51034

Kristin Matasovsky

Sincerely,

Herman & Sharon Sahr

### **6th Grade Pre Catechism Class and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Catechism Class Starts September 4th**

Sixth, Seventh & Eighth grade classes will resume on Wed. Sept. 4. These are held directly after the school day, so the children can ride the bus to class and be picked up by parents at 5:45 pm when they are dismissed. They will take turns supplying a light snack.

I invite the entire congregation to read the information that is on the bulletin board outside of our Youth Catechism Class Room, # 212. I believe that it is good if the whole congregation is aware of what are 7th and 8th graders are learning, so that we can all encourage them during this important time. - Pastor

### **Optional 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Catechism Class**

I encourage our 6<sup>th</sup> grade children to take advantage of our *Optional 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Catechism Class*. While this class, unlike our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Catechism Class, isn't required prior to confirmation, I certainly encourage and recommend it. The curriculum of the class, taught by Carol Gale, is based on the major foundational Bible stories. Having a solid grasp on the basic Bible stories are fundamentally important prior to entering 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Catechism Class. Also, this class will focus heavily on helping your child memorize Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, which will be required memory work for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Catechism Class. Additionally, it is helpful if your child already has the catechism memorized before Catechism Class, so they can focus on understanding the language of the faith besides just learning the language itself. As to say, we learn how to speak language before we can understand higher thoughts. - Pastor

### **New Adult Catechism Class Starts September 15th**

The purpose of the class is to teach what we believe, teach, and confess here at *Zion Lutheran Church* as part of the *Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*. This class is for new members of Zion and those interested in membership. To accomplish this task I will primarily teach from the Bible and Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. The class is designed so that you are free to ask questions when they arise. For those not confirmed, this class can lead toward confirmation.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith, or have any questions, please contact me ASAP. Our first class will be Sunday, September 15, from 11:15-12:30. We will meet in the Fireside Room downstairs. The class will meet for about 15 weeks, but may go longer depending on the dynamics of the class. Please contact me, if you plan to attend—Pastor

In Christ,

Pastor T. Clint Stark

[PastorStark@gmail.com](mailto:PastorStark@gmail.com)

715-379-3236 (cell)

# b l b

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!!

Sharon Sahr	9/1
Rosie Hoepner	9/5
Kelly Hunt	9/5
Joan Lee	9/7
Carol Gale	9/10
Kristy Heisinger	9/12
Roderick Hurt	9/12
Jan Fischer	9/16
Tom Bowe	9/18
Brad Blake	9/20
Scott Ziebarth	9/20
Jack Welke	9/21
Christy Welke	9/26
Carol Evenson	9/28
Gene Neumann	9/29
Herman Sahr	9/29

## ♥ HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO: ♥

Steven & Patricia Taylor 9/11/1976

## † WE ASK YOU TO REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS THE HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:

Mavis Berry Emma Bollom  
Loretta Erickson Helen Hempelman

## PASTOR'S PICKS:

I have added some reading material on our website on issues such as: Women in Combat, Word and Sacrament Ministry vs. Church Growth, and the Transforming Churches Network. If you don't use the internet and would like a hard copy, let me know.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:

## WOMEN'S SOCIETY NEWS:

Lois Eichinger welcomed 14 ladies to her home for our August meeting. After enjoying Lois' tasty dessert Doreen Szedlak led us in devotions. The subject was vacations or times of rest. Several Bible passages were read. Genesis 2:3, Exodus 23:12, Matthew 11:28 and Hebrews 4:9 and 10. The passages showed us God's words regarding the importance of rest. Land and animals were also included. True peace and rest can only be found in our Lord and Savior. After a brief business meeting we closed with the Lord's Prayer. Thank you so much Lois for your gracious invitation. We will next meet on Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at church at 1:00 p.m. Diane Gettler will be hostess. All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE FELLOWSHIP BOARD

Summer seemed to be rather short this year. So it was good to be able to enjoy another Worship in the Park and Potluck Picnic on a nice August Sunday. We were so pleased to see such a great turnout. The Fellowship Board wishes to thank everyone who helped to make the day a huge success. This annual fellowship opportunity would not be possible without the assistance of this congregation. Thanks to all who were able to join us for a time to worship and then enjoy tasting all the delicious food that was provided. We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to gather together in His name.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL REPORT:

Pastor has often mentioned when encouraging the support for youth to attend "Higher Things" events. They have it right > they do study - so you can learn; they do worship > which is reverent and gives Glory to God; they do fun > which is fun and appropriate. This describes our summer VBS. Each day God came to the 25 students in attendance "FROM ABOVE" during opening and closing devotions. We received His word, returning praise. At each learning station they studied Bible Stories and Catechism facts regarding truths connected with baptism. The songs, crafts, skits, and games all reinforced these truths. Even the fellowship and light supper gave hints of the evenings lessons. We leaders, shepherds and students had FUN. We all learned and we all worshipped together. If you attended the "Worship in the Park" you could witness this through the songs the children shared and the enthusiasm which the children exhibited.

## RADIO & FLOWERS:

If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion please call the office. **Altar flowers** are **\$30.00** at Gordys if **you pick up** yourself or **\$40.00** if you would like them **delivered** to the church. You also may bring your own flowers. There is a flower chart in the church on the left of the door as you enter from the education wing. Sign your name by the date you would like to furnish flowers. **The radio broadcast is \$76.00.** Call the office if you would like to furnish a broadcast or if you would like the Secretary to order and have the flowers delivered.