

**January, 2024**



## *The Shepherd*

*Monthly newsletter of Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church,  
Missouri Synod, Colorado Springs, CO*

### **A Better Resolution!**

Dearly Beloved,

As church attendance continues to decline world-wide, it's appropriate that you be reminded of just how important it is for Christians to attend Divine Services. First, who is the church? The church is the congregation of saints, the people of God, among whom the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments (Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are rightly administered. The Gospel and the Sacraments are the "lifeblood" of a Christian, since it is through these very Means, as through instruments, that our Lord comes to the sinner to bring him to repentance and to bestow on him the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Those who have been baptized continue in their Christian life by gathering with their fellow believers to hear the Word and receive the Body and Blood

of Christ. Gathering for Divine Service of the Word and the Sacraments (where God serves you with His good gifts so that you may continue in the faith and be saved; and that's why it's *Divine* Service) is not optional, nor an occasional "extra" in the life of a Christian! On the contrary, it is the very center of your life in Christ Jesus, your Lord and Redeemer! Just being baptized or being on the "membership roll" of a congregation does not make you a Christian! Now for the Law: if you do not continue to hear the Word and continually abide in Christ; as Jesus says, "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me*" (St. John 15:4).

Christians "abide" in Christ Jesus! Many are under the false perception that if they "believe in Jesus" (or at least think they do), they don't need to go to church, when in reality it is people who *believe in Jesus* who indeed do go to church; so that they may continue to "abide" in Christ Jesus. Again, it is in the preaching of the Word and in the proper administration of the blessed Sacraments where Christ Jesus has promised to be for us for the salvation of our souls.

Just "saying" you believe in Christ, and using His name and thinking that saves you apart from hearing the Word and receiving the Sacraments is a false delusion and has led you into false security, which may well end up damning you! Again, our Lord Jesus says when speaking of the Day of Judgment, "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'*" (St. Matthew 7:21-23). How horrible it will be on that great Day of Judgment for those who will hear these damning words from the mouth of the Lord, "*I never knew you, depart from me....*"

Saying that you believe in Jesus, and rarely hearing His Word or receiving His very Body and Blood is like telling your husband or wife that you love him or her, but never spending any time at all talking to, hearing from, or seeing, him or her. That's not love; but a lie! Our Lord has given us the command to hear His Word in the Ten Commandments. As we learn in the Catechism: "*What is the Third Commandment? Remember the Sabbath day*

*by keeping it holy. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.”*

We despise God’s holy Word when we refuse or deliberately neglect opportunities to hear Him, for hearing the Word is something we should do “gladly!” If you are not glad to hear the Word, then how can you consider yourself to be a Christian; even a believer? Why does God give us this commandment? Is it because He wants to burden us with “having” to go to the Divine Service? No! He gives us this commandment for our own good, so that we may not neglect His Gospel gifts and so that, ultimately, we can be with Him in His eternal kingdom! He knows how the world, the devil, and our own sinful flesh easily become weak and cause us to drift from the faith that saves, so He has provided His services (Divine Services) of Gospel and Sacrament, so that we may be strengthened and nourished and kept in the one true faith as we wander in the wilderness of this life. The services of the Gospel and Sacraments are given to us out of love for us, for our own eternal good, so we should be devoted to them.

In Acts 2, after many of the people became Christians through the preaching of the Word and Baptism on the day of Pentecost, we are told what the believers did after converting to faith in Christ. We are told that “...*they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers*” (Acts 2:42). Christians are “devoted to” 1) the apostles’ teaching, which is the preaching of the Word; 2) the fellowship, which is the gathering together of Christians to be in communion with one another; 3) the breaking of bread, which is the Lord’s Supper; and 4) the prayers, which is the church making petitions to God and praising Him. This is exactly what Christians do when they gather for Divine Service.

This passage from Acts describes what the Christian is devoted to after their Baptism into Christ. And parents, who have their children baptized, if they are at all concerned about the eternal salvation of their children, will bring their children up in this faith and practice.

The apathy and indifference of Christians toward Divine Services, schools, Sunday morning Catechesis and Bible Studies of the church is astounding! We still live in a country where we are free to attend services and believe in

the one true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You may not care, but that doesn't change the fact that many Christians literally die to go to church! And yet we sit here with all our comforts and could not care less. If people who profess to be Christians and allow their names to stand on congregational membership lists don't even take the faith seriously, why should anyone else? Why is church attendance often so poor? There is really and truly no excuse and your Lord on the great Last Day...will not hear your excuse(s)!

In the book of Revelation, St. John is allowed to see the veil between heaven and earth pulled aside, while he is worshiping “*in the Spirit,*” “*on the Lord's Day.*” He sees the heavenly worship and describes it, primarily, in Revelation 4, 5, and 7. While we cannot see behind the veil between heaven and earth (though we do get a glimpse from Revelation), we can be certain that the services where Christ Himself is present are no small thing and that there is much more going on than we can ever see! I encourage you to read and ponder Hebrews 12:22-29! May we abide in Christ Jesus now, so that one day we can see the other side of the veil, which is more than we could even take right now.

***Here's a better resolution:*** I will be at Divine Service every Sunday and there I know that I will be served by my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I will hear that my sins are forgiven and I will receive His Body and Blood for the strengthening of my faith unto life and salvation!

That's a better resolution!

Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

*In His (and Your) Service,*

Pastor



## *Church Calendar*

**Divine Service 9:00AM**  
**Bible Study at 10:30 AM**

- Sun, Dec 31:** **Eve of the Circumcision of Our Lord**
- Sat., Jan. 6,** **7:00p.m. The Epiphany of Our Lord**
- Sun, Jan 7:** **The Baptism of Our Lord Divine Service**
- Tue, Jan 9:** **Circuit Meeting (@ Rock of Ages)**
- Sun, Jan 14:** **Second Sun. after Epiphany II**
- Sat, Jan 20:** **9:00a.m. Men of the Shepherd-LC – The Creed, Art. II)+ Elders’ Meeting (10:30 am)**
- Sun. Jan. 21** **The Transfiguration of Our Lord**  
**Divine Service**
- Sun, Jan 28:** **Septuagesima (Pre-Lent )**







## *Festival of St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor*

*January 24*

St. Timothy had Christian believers in his family. His mother, Eunice, was a Christian woman and was the daughter of a Christian woman named Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). Acts records that St. Paul met Timothy on his second missionary journey and wanted Timothy to continue on with him (16:1-3). Over time, Timothy became a dear friend and close associate of Paul to whom Paul entrusted mission work in Greece and Asia Minor. Timothy was also with Paul in Rome. According to tradition, after Paul's death, Timothy went to Ephesus, where he served as bishop and was martyred around AD 97. Timothy is best remembered as a faithful companion of Paul, one who rendered great service among the Gentile churches.

### *A Reflection by Fr. Valerius Herberger (21 April 1562-18 May 1627, German Lutheran preacher and theologian):*

“Dearly beloved, today we celebrate the commemoration of St. Timothy. He was born in Lystra (Acts 16:2); his father was a pagan, but his mother, Eunice, born an Israelite, had accepted the Christian faith and had committed her son, Timothy, to be raised by her mother, Lois, who was also a Christian. So Timothy learned the catechism from his grandmother. See, dear parents, what the diligent training of children can do! Now since he was a good, excellent thinker, St. Paul accepted him as his colleague or chaplain, and since he improved himself daily, Paul eventually ordained him as bishop of Ephesus, where he was also killed by the raging pagans. St. Paul loved him dearly, which we can see from both epistles that he wrote to him. In 1

Timothy 1:2, he calls him his true son in the faith. From these two epistles, many passages shine forth like the stars of heaven:

- 1 Timothy 1:5: “The aim of the commandment is love from a pure heart and from a good conscience and from a faith unfeigned.”
- 1 Timothy 1:15: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”
- 2 Timothy 3:12: “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

Since St. Paul and St. Timothy were dear friends, they were put beside each other in the calendar, and also on the day of St. Timothy, the Gospel of St. John 15:9-16 is read, which speaks of pure love and friendship.”

***Let us pray:*** *Lord Jesus Christ, You have always given to Your Church on earth faithful shepherds such as Timothy to guide and feed Your flock. Make all pastors diligent to preach Your holy Word and administer Your means of grace, and grant Your people wisdom to follow in the way that leads to life eternal; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (Source: The Treasury of Daily Prayer)*





## The Catechetical Kernel

Collect  
of the  
Day

## The Collect

*January 2024*

The Collect is a prayer that focuses on the content of the Holy Gospel or Epistle reading. It is part of the Propers of the day. Since it is a “proper” this means it changes from Sunday to Sunday just like the Introit.

The prayer is “proper” for a particular Sunday. Thus, it aids in the unity of thought in the service. MOST IMPORTANTLY, like all other liturgical elements, the Collect serves the Gospel and glorifies the LORD by focusing our faith, outwardly, on the presence and promises of God! This is a great strength of liturgical worship over and against emotion-based charismatic style praise services that often focus one inward. Since emotions focus you on self; it will obscure what God has said and done for you!

The Collect is always reverent. It is not written or spoken in a free, extemporaneous style. Yet, we should never fall into the mistaken notion that written prayers are not spiritual. On the contrary, a written prayer is a well thought out reflection of our God of Order! Both written and extemporaneous prayers have a place among God’s people as long as the prayer is truly “God-centered” in the thought it conveys and in the heart of faith that prays it.

The Collect follows a five part pattern:

- 1. God is addressed.** Typically, the Father, but prayers addressed to the Son and Holy Spirit are also used when appropriate;
- 2. The basis of the prayer:** (e.g. “...since you have awakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep...”);
- 3. The request:** (e.g. “...grant us Your Spirit that we may know the voice of our Shepherd...”);
- 4. The purpose or benefit:** (e.g. “...that sin and death may never pluck us out of Your hand...”);
- 5. The ending is a doxology** and serves to clarify once again that we are praying to the One and Only Triune God. (e.g. “...through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever”).

*The Peace of the Lord be with you,*

*Pastor* ✝





## Members

Jill Damec

Darrell Root

Marlene Schmidt

Cheri Penwell

## Military

Captain Rob Landers (USAF) (Barry's Son-in-Law)

Captain Abel Wilson (USAF) (Friend of SSLC)

2LT Frederick Heidt (USAF) (Friend of Larry and Sue)

First Sergeant (USA) Benjamin Kueter

Master Sergeant (USMC) Kyle Chase (Dale & Kari's Nephew)

Sergeant First Class (USA) Jordan Etchells (Dale & Kari's Son)

SrA Trevor Smith (USAF)

## Family Members

Patty Krueger (Barry's Wife)

Kathi Chase (Kari's Sister)

Jacob Damec (Jeff and Jill's Son)

Rainer Dieterle (Conny's Father)

Tyson (Tiffany's Uncle)

Eli (Shannon and Ben's nephew)

Janice Patterson (Pastor's Mother)



## **Happy January Birthdays**

**01-14 Shannon Kueter**

**01-20 Marlene Schmidt**

**01-21 Eli Packer**

## ***End of 2023 Thank you***

**It takes many hands and lots of heart to keep Shepherd of the Springs humming along especially at this time of year. While it is impossible to list ALL that has been done, let's take a moment to reflect as we begin a New Year. Here is just a short list of SSLC members' work together.**

**Planning and re-organizing the Narthex,**

**Planning and serving of Thanksgiving potluck, Advent suppers**

**Contributions to Holy Apostles Food Pantry**

**Sewing new vestments for acolytes**

**Coordinating organ music**

**The Guidance and Words of Wisdom from our Pastor**

**Welcoming new members**

**Weekly refreshments: food, set up, and clean up.**

**Gifts of poinsettias and glorious wreaths**

**Shoveling of sidewalks when the snow falls**





## The Story Behind Wedding Rings

Submitted by Gary Law

This is a story of how a symbol has changed over time.

Wedding rings spring from a pagan tradition. In many pagan cultures, men kidnapped women from other tribes or villages to take as wives. The women were bound with restraints around their wrists and ankles as reminders they now belonged to their captors. Later, after the kidnapping practice had ceased, a ring was placed upon the finger of the bride as a symbol of the woman's submissive relationship to her new husband.

At first, the Christian church refused to be part of this tradition and the use of a ring in the marriage ceremony was not permitted. In 800 A.D., Pope Nicholas stated the ring was no longer to be a mark of servitude, but a symbol of "the eternity, constancy, and integrity of life". As a circle, with no beginning or ending, it is a symbol of the Christian marriage which is to last for as long as the husband and wife are on this earth. The groom receiving a ring is a fairly recent (last several centuries) custom. It is intended to be a reminder that the marriage is designed to last until death. It also is a statement that the marriage is a binding to "each other" and limits the dominant-submissive roles supported earlier. In a Christian marriage, both rings should be reminders of vows taken before God.

Why is the ring placed on the third finger (fourth if counting the thumb?) Greek and Roman anatomists believed that a vein and nerve led straight from the heart to the third finger of the left hand. This was considered the "healing finger".

As late as the sixteenth century, the groom recited the Trinitarian formula as he placed the ring on the finger of his bride. First he touched the ring to the tip of the thumb with the words: "In the name of the Father...", then to the forefinger with "...and to the Son...", then to the middle finger "...and of the Holy Spirit." Finally he placed it on the third finger saying "Amen". Perhaps a tradition we should bring back?



*By: Ana Méndez Ferrell*

## **O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright (LSB #395)**

Compiled by Evelyn Law

Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608) wrote the text and tune to this Epiphany hymn during the bubonic plague outbreak of 1598. Over the years, it has been described as the marriage of Biblically pure and comforting theology with musical reverence and beauty.

The third of eight children, Nicolai was born at Mengerlinghausen in Waldeck (Hessen, Germany), the son of a pastor. From childhood he exhibited an outstanding intellect. As a teenager, he showed a special liking for poetry and an interest in theology.

Martin Luther's teachings greatly influenced Nicolai. He studied theology at Wittenberg (1547-1549) and Erfurt (1574-1579). He received his doctorate from Wittenberg and was ordained in 1583.

At his first parish in the city of Herdecke, he soon battled with the Roman Catholic town council. When Spanish troops arrived to reestablish Roman dominance, Pastor Nicolai fled. In 1588 he became chief pastor at Altwildungen. Countess Argaretha of Waldeck appointed him her court preacher, father confessor, and the tutor of her son, Count Wilhelm Ernst. Count Ernst's untimely death from the bubonic plague in 1598 inspired Pastor Nicolai to write "Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying" (LSB #516).

Also during that time, Pastor Nicolai battled with Calvinists about the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. These doctrinal controversies were renewed when he became pastor at St. Catharine's Church at Unna,



Westphalia. These were hard days for Nicolai. Two sisters died, and from mid 1597 to early 1598 the plague hit, with death taking more than 1,300 of Unna's inhabitants. On one particular day they dug thirty graves. The crisis brought out the pastor in Nicolai. He immersed himself in caring for his congregation, praying for them, and focusing them on the eternal life that is theirs in Christ. He was forced to leave Unna at the end of 1598 due to impending war with the Spaniards, returning months later in April of 1599.

In 1600, at the age of 44, Pastor Nicolai married Catharine von der Recke, a widow with two children. In 1601 he received a call to serve St. Catharine's Church in Hamburg. Beloved by his colleagues and congregation, he was offered three professorships during his time at Hamburg but turned each of them down. He remained in Hamburg the rest of his life and was buried in St. Catharine's Church.

Pastor Nicolai composed several volumes of poetry that centered around Christ's eminent return. During one of the plague outbreaks, he gave the following context to one of his writings: "Day by day I wrote out my meditations, found myself, thank God, wonderfully well, comforted in heart, joyful in spirit, and truly content; gave to my manuscript the name and title of "A Mirror of the Joys of Everlasting Life" to leave behind me (if God should call me from this world) as the token of peaceful, joyful, Christian departure, or (if God should spare me in health) to comfort other sufferers whom he should also visit with the pestilence."

As we celebrate this and future Epiphany seasons, let us remember the wise man, Philipp Nicolai, who followed the Morning Star, Jesus the Christ.



## **"Ring Out, Wild Bells"**

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.  
Published in 1850, the year he was  
appointed Poet Laureat

*Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.*

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

*Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.*

*Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.*

*Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.*

*Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good*

*Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.*

***Ring in the valiant man and  
free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier  
hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the  
land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.***



The Shepherd is a monthly publication of the Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church,  
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**Where the Lutheran Reformation lives!**

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**We are experimenting with a new masthead of the SSLC newsletter. Please feel free to send comments to Pastor or Sue Groggel. Thank you.**