



NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Marquette, Michigan

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E-Notes for June 30, 2016

The Season of Pentecost

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I believe to my bone marrow that the church's only mission objective is to connect as many people as possible with the love of Jesus. It is the only thing we do that no one else does and the only thing that no one will do if we don't do it."

- Bishop Wayne Miller

Metropolitan Chicago Synod

"I Have Overcome the World"

by Pastor Chris Johnson, Christ the King, Escanaba

"In the midst of a world gone mad, I would be so bold as

to say holding on to that very promise of justification by faith in Christ is even more important. Through faith in Christ's sacrificial act of love and mercy, through faith in the promise of new life with God, everything changes. This is why Jesus himself can proclaim: 'I have overcome the world' - even though in the eyes of his tormentors the exact opposite seemed to be true. As Paul went throughout the Mediterranean world, he no doubt saw or heard about extreme acts of violence. He himself, when martyred, was on the receiving end of wanton bloodshed and violence at the hands of Nero, the crazed Roman emperor. Paul, like Peter, lost his life under horrific circumstances. Yet he died trusting the promise of Christ's victory over the grave, over violence, over hatred, over this world of shadow and decay.

As Christians, recognizing our bloody past and present (Christians are the most persecuted religious group the world over), this causes us to have the utmost compassion upon any who are suffering - Christian or non-Christian. What happened in Orlando recently was tragic, sad, awful, another example of horrific violence that human beings (even just one) are capable of. No doubt, many people are fearful - especially those in the gay community. Regardless of where you stand on gay marriage, or how comfortable you are with those who live in same-gendered partnerships, we all can agree that no one, absolutely no one, deserves to have their life snuffed out in such an awful way. Yet the violence continues...

Many people are asking again: Are guns the problem? Are Muslims the problem? Who can we trust anymore? And so the blame game and the fear game continues. This blame game is also what is called 'self-justification' - a far cry from justification by faith alone in Christ alone.

In the midst of all this, Christ says that he has 'overcome the world' and that we are to 'take heart.' Now, why would he say such a thing? As Christians, we know that the world we live in is a world which is passing away. Human

progress is a double-edged sword - though we have found more comfortable ways of living, we have always found more diabolical ways of killing. Paul and other New Testament authors would refer to this aeon we live in as the 'present evil age.' Even Jesus himself said to not be alarmed by atrocities (Matthew 24:6-8) and in our passage above said there will be tribulation.

Perhaps this is why Jesus was also so bold to say these words in Matthew 10:28 - 'And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.' Perhaps even more boldly, Jesus told his disciples this as well (Matthew 5:43-48): 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'"

Faith, forgiveness, fear: How will you respond in the midst of it all? Perhaps that was one of Jesus' points: For change to happen out in the world, change must happen in the human heart first. And for the human heart to change, only the Gospel, only being justified by faith in Christ will enemies become friends, will unbelievers become followers of Jesus, will violence be changed into peace. But living in a broken world, we know that this new reality offered in Christ will be despised, rejected. Only in the world to come will all of this be so. And this new world, this new creation, will one day be coming. Perhaps that was Jesus' main point: Only in the kingdom yet to be fully revealed will eternal peace be possible. And thanks be to God, he conquered the evil, the violence, the death of this world in

order to inaugurate and promise something more beautiful than we can even realize. Jesus has overcome this world and we walk by faith for now, and not by sight."

1517 - 2017

**THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION**

"FROM CONFLICT TO COMMUNION"

Journeying Toward Shared Faith and Life

This event will facilitate discussion,
prompt reflection, and urge collective action
that builds mutual understanding
and strengthens ties among diverse expressions of faith.

Finlandia University and the Northern Great Lakes Synod

September 25-27

at Finlandia University

Hancock, Michigan

This conference is for clergy and interested lay people and will feature presentations by **Bishop Alex Malasusa** of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Tanzania
and
Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota
Historian Professor **Dr. Mark Granquist.**

Worship
Panel Discussions
Key Notes
Workshops
Banquet

Register online at www.nglsynod.org/reformation

Ad Campaign Update!

Please send us a digital copy of the outside of your church building for the Ad Campaign. A "landing page" is being developed and we want people to see your church! Check out your congregation's information at **www.churchisgood.org**.

Thank you to all those congregations who have been able to give to support this effort. We have received donations from Endowment Funds, General Funds, Memorial Funds, and individuals. As of today, we have received almost \$15,000 with promises of more to come. If your congregation has not yet made a donation, please consider what you can give. We have covered the cost of production, and now need to buy air time. You are invited to be a part of this exciting new way to **WITNESS!!!**

LIFTING UP TO GOD IN PRAYER

+For peace, the end of war, for justice and for all who need the peace of Jesus.

+We pray for those on vacation, for those traveling and those enjoying the beauty of our Upper Peninsula and Northeastern Wisconsin.

+For the United States of America and for our leaders. God bless all peace loving people.

The Star-Spangled Banner

"O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

4th Stanza of the National Anthem

by Francis Scott Key

Mark Your Calendars!!

The Festival is Coming! The Festival is Coming!

**Friday - Saturday, October 28-29
at First, Gladstone**

**Come for opening Festival Worship done up righteous!
Stay for a cornucopia of ideas and information.**

The following workshops have been confirmed:

Faith Out Loud

Put it Out Loud

Practicing Discipleship

World Hunger

What Can Thrivent Do for You?

Funding Your Efforts through Endowment

Stewardship Today

Constitutional Review - the Latest Amendments

Lutheran Social Services

Effective Use of Social Media in the Parish

What is a Reconciled in Christ Congregation?

Human Trafficking and What Can We Do About It?

Ideas to Mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Women of the Reformation

A Sneaky Visitor Tells All

We will have displays, door prizes, new ideas, and more. Past Festival participants remarked on the positive energy, the joy of being together, and the great sparks of creativity that they brought back to their own congregations.

Don't Miss it!!

Pastors! Looking for a great Continuing Education opportunity?

Go to www.leadingwell.net

Grants funded by the Siebert Foundation

ROAD TRIP TO MINNEAPOLIS

THE BAD NEWS: While interest in going to Germany and Lutherland was high, many folks, for many reasons, were not able to go. So the Germany trip of September 2016 has been cancelled.

THE GOOD NEWS: You have the chance to see some of the history of the Reformation anyway!!

November 9-11, 2016

The NGLS is sponsoring a bus tour to Minneapolis to see an exhibit of artifacts and Luther-memorabilia sponsored by Thrivet at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Cost will be about \$250 per person based on double occupancy. This includes bus, hotel, most meals, and exhibit with guided tour.

Register by sending a \$100 deposit to:
Northern Great Lakes Synod
1029 N. Third Street, Suite A
Marquette, MI 49855

For a tentative schedule of events, check out our website!

**The bus holds 56 people.
Once it's full, it's full!!**

Always Being Made New Campaign

Thank you to all the congregations and individuals who contributed to the Always Being Made New Campaign for 2015!

We now have almost \$5000 that is available for grants to our Northern Great Lakes Synod congregations for Barrier Free Projects. For more information on details and how to apply, go to www.nglsynod.org.

Application deadline is September 1, 2016.

DOMESTIC HUNGER GRANTS AVAILABLE

Congregations interested in applying for ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants should note the following deadlines:

July 10 - Deadline for completed application

Grants awarded on a two year cycle - current funding will be for 2016-2017.

FAIR TRADE USERS: To celebrate 20 years of making a difference through Fair Trade, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is offering a coupon for 20% off your next order.

The coupon can be found in the latest issue of "Living Lutheran." This might be a good time to get your congregation to start using these products. Go to: www.lwrcoffee.com and use the different code, Lutheran20, when you place your order.

**Check out www.prayfaithfully.org
for weekly "Breath Prayer"
and Daily Devotions.
The synod website is www.nalsynod.org**

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from the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop

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