

PASTOR'S PAGE

Absolve thyself?

Jesus does not put us on trial and make us pay for our own sin, but he, himself, is put on trial in our place.

He traverses the universe at his leisure with the snap of his finger. Fear has no leverage on him. Time has no dominion over him. His presence is immersed in the theater of trial in which he is both judge and jury. As one who is omnipotent and immortal, he declares himself arbiter over all. Welcome to the life of a self-proclaimed god in the Sci-Fi tv series, *Star Trek: Picard*. Welcome to Q.

This character is not new to the *Star Trek* franchise. For over thirty years the immortal, omnipotent, god-like being known as Q has forged his way through many *Star Trek* series. As a god-like being, he temporarily puts on human flesh that he may engage in their likeness. However, he engages not as peer or counterpart, but as teacher, judge, and confessor. The lives of humans are a game to him, and he frequently takes amusement in their weakness. Whenever Q emerges, chaos is sure to ensue.

The court of Q perpetually tries and condemns humanity. The trademarks to his tribunal include second chances, choosing the road not taken, and revisiting the past. And in the recent, *Star Trek: Picard*, Q returns with signature provocations.

Jean-Luc Picard, the man Q refers to affectionately as *mon capitaine*, is a Frenchman, the former captain of a starship, and now a commanding admiral. He's a leader and a man imprisoned by fear and guilt. Over the years, Q has acted as confessor and counselor to Jean Luc even as the captain remains shackled by the guilt of his past. At the end of the series, Q emerges one final time to deliver a parting gift for his mortal friend: he shows up so that Picard may be absolved.

As his confessor, Q requires a penance. Jean-Luc is told that he must absolve himself. He must, as Q states, "know thyself." Atonement and forgiveness must come from within. His guilt must be washed clean by another. Picard is left with an ultimatum, "Absolve yourself, or the only life left unsaved will be your own."

Once Picard completes such a penance, we watch as Q, dressed in priestly garments dark as the night sky, looks into the eyes of his penitent. But in contrast to how this great high priest of the universe has defined atonement as something inward, we see his actions designate it as something else: "You are now unshackled from the past. As I leave, I leave you free." In other words, I absolve you.

It wasn't enough for Picard to undertake self-absolution. He needed atonement from outside of himself. He needed to hear the words of absolution from his confessor, Q. He needed assurance of forgiveness from another to comfort his troubled conscience.

Our Lord does not snap his fingers to flex his cosmic abilities and put on our human flesh just for show.

Likewise, our absolution must come from outside of ourselves. We cannot wash away our own iniquities. If we set out to truly "know thyself" as Q suggests, we can only go as far as to confess with the apostle John that, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (1 John 1:8)." We cannot earn our forgiveness. Atonement must be made for our offenses, and it must come from another.

Our God comes to us as teacher, judge, and confessor. However, our Lord does not snap his fingers to flex his cosmic abilities and put on our human flesh just for show. In his incarnation, Christ comes to us to dwell with us. He comes to sympathize with us in our weakness. He comes as the incarnate Son of God not to condemn, but to save.

Jesus does not put us on trial and make us pay for our own sin, but he, himself, is put on trial in our place. He is judged guilty for our sin, and we are judged righteous on account of the work of Christ for us; the all-powerful God dies in our place, he atones for our sins.

The stain of sin is washed away, not by your own doing, but by the Lord's doing in the waters of your Holy Baptism. In the words of absolution given to you from your pastor, you hear the words of Christ, "I forgive you." In the Lord's Supper, you receive the true body and blood of our Lord for the forgiveness of all your sins. God comes to you with the gift of absolution only he can give. As you leave, you leave free.

In this way we can rejoice with Simeon and proclaim, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples (Luke 2:29-31)."

We are free.

We're free to forgive our neighbor as we have been forgiven. We're free to love and serve those around us, as we have been unshackled from the guilt of our sins. We are absolved, God sent his Son to make it so. The crucified and risen Son of God has declared us not guilty. When God forgives us, there is no need to absolve ourselves. We are fully forgiven and at peace with our Lord. In the words of Jean-Luc Picard, "Engage!"

Kathy Morales graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College with a B.A. in Media Design. She is currently a writing contributor with Christ Hold Fast, Higher Things, and Coffee by Gillespie, as well as a freelance graphic designer. She is the co-author of "The Sinner/Saint Lenten Devotional" from 1517 Publishing.



PASTOR CELEBRATES 25 YEARS IN THE MINISTRY

On Sunday, July 24, we honored Pastor Steele who celebrated his 25th year in the ministry. Pastor was ordained on July 20, 1997. Todd Matte presented Pastor with his certificate from the South Wisconsin District – LCMS and enjoyed some cake, coffee and fellowship after the service. Congratulations, Pastor Steele!

JULY/AUGUST MISSION OF THE MONTH – Lutheran Deaf Mission Society (LDMS)

It is estimated that approximately ninety-eight percent of Deaf people in the United States do not attend church. This is, in part, due to the limited number of deaf churches. While the number of full-time pastors serving Deaf churches has decreased, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has seen an increase in the number of Deaf pastors, deacons, deaconesses, and lay leaders who use sign language to communicate the Gospel message. This has happened because of programs like [Deaf Pah](#) and the [Deaf Institute of Theology](#). LDMS will engage in evangelism and Christian education training to help Deaf Persons and their families see Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and engage in stewardship and leadership training to help Deaf Persons serve Jesus Christ. To learn more, visit their website at www.deafjesus.com

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone had a blessed Independence Day. The fireworks were cancelled due to rain for the first time (that I can remember) in decades, but it was still a great day to celebrate our freedom. May God Bless America.

Last month, the Bethany Council officially appointed Kelly Paltzer as Treasurer, taking over for Derek Mackenzie. Derek had asked me to take a break from the Treasurer role late last year after serving many years, and Kelly, who is an accountant agreed to take on the role. Derek remains on the Board of Finance and has helped Kelly transition into the role. I would like to thank Derek for his dedication over the years, and officially welcome Kelly!

The streaming camera, sound system, and Wi-Fi upgrades were completed (under budget) on July 12th, and the first service with the new equipment was streamed on Sunday, July 17th. We had a few challenges along the way, including a problem with one of our phones when the new Wi-Fi was put in. As a result, we are switching to Spectrum. The new phones (same phone number) will be installed soon.

The new guest WiFi system is called "Bethany WiFi" and the password is "BethanyLutheran" for those who want access. The WiFi upgrade has extended access to the Fellowship Hall and the Bible Study room which provides capability to stream content (including Sunday School and confirmation lessons in the future). This will help us during Council meetings, as well.

God Bless and to God be the Glory!

Todd Matte - Council President

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8-03: Debbie Perry
8-06: Jim Herzog
8-08: Judy Albert
Daniel Menzer
8-09: Dolores Gehrke
8-12: Lori Allmann
Roxanne Taylor
Charlotte Menzer



8-13: Barbara Herzog
8-15: Kieran Fibiger
8-18: Sara Hasler
8-25: Kyle Allmann
8-27: Maggie Yang
Conrad Hasler
8-30: Julie Steele

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8-12: Andy & Gina Fibiger
8-16: John & Laura Tershner
8-18: Ray & Shirley Ottman
8-23: Steve & Debbie Perry



If a birthday or anniversary has been missed, please contact the church office to let us know.



COMBINED CHIME CHOIR

Are you interested in playing the hand chimes? We will be starting a combined chime choir for both the children and adults. Practices will be before church on Sundays starting at about 9:30am. Remember, you do not need to know how to read music to play the chimes. The notes are color coded, and the music will be simple. Anyone can do it! Please consider enhancing our services with the beautiful sound of the chimes! See Julie Steele if you have any questions or if you are interested in joining us.



Bethany's Annual Church Picnic
Sunday, September 11
11:00am - 2:00pm
Bethany Lutheran Church

Food • Games • Prizes • Fellowship • Fun!
AND... We're bring back BINGO this year!!

All proceeds will benefit
Project Angel Hugs and Anchor of Hope

Sign-Up Sheets for attendance, donation needs, and volunteer opportunities will be posted soon in the lower narthex at. Please consider helping make this event a success!

CHURCH PICNIC PRIZES NEEDED

Could you help out with prizes for games? We are looking for **children's game prizes** such as: small toys, crayons, school supplies, small snack items, candy, dolls, stickers, coloring books, small books, crafts, jewelry etc. In addition to the kids prizes we are also looking for small adult **bingo prizes** as well. These items should be new or very gently used and can be placed in the basket that can be found in the lower narthex. If you'd rather make a monetary donation towards prizes, you can place your money in the offering plate and mark it "church picnic prizes" or give to Gina in the church office. Thank you!

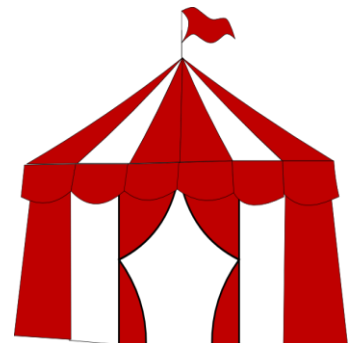


- Sunday School: Begins Sunday September 11. All children ages 3 through 8th grade are invited to join us each Sunday morning from 8:45 – 9:45am. Please call the church office with any questions about Sunday School.
- Adult Bible Study: Begins Sunday September 11. All adults and confirmed children are invited to join us in the church basement for Bible Study from 8:45 – 9:45am. See Pastor Steele with any questions about the Study.

Community Family Fair
at Lutheran High School

Saturday, September 10 ~ 2 - 6 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to this community-wide event. Children of all ages can enjoy a great variety of inflatable play structures, festival games with prizes, and skill-challenging games. Enter the pie-eating contest, drop your name in our family-fun basket drawings, and enjoy food and beverages under the tent. Tickets are \$1 each and are available at the event Welcome Tent



ALARIC'S DREAM TRIP

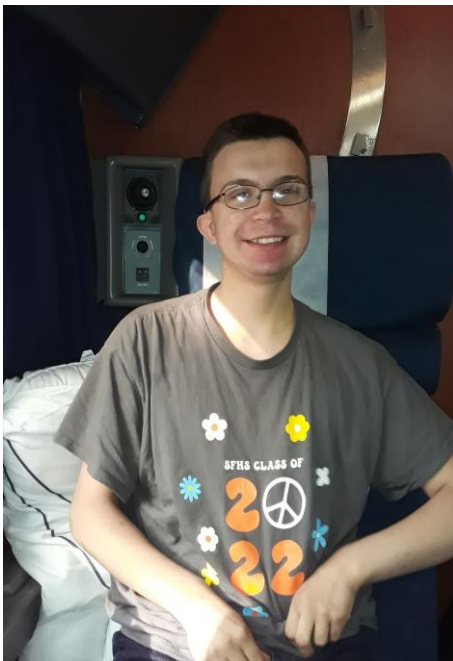
The Hazen Family wishes to humbly thank our Bethany Family and Friends for helping to raise money for Alaric's wish trip and for all of your continued love, prayers, and support. We are truly blessed to have all of you in our lives. Here are a few pictures from our trip.



The Grand Canyon



The Rocky Mountains



Alaric in his seat on the train



We surprised Alaric with a visit with Dr. Jeff Young from the show 'Dr. Jeff the Rocky Mountain Vet'

We thank God for protecting us and getting us home safely. As many of you know, the train that was headed east on Monday June 27th that was supposed to come back to get us on Thursday collided with a dump truck and we had to find an alternate route home. Even though this was not what we planned, God protected all of us that day. He did not let us get hurt. We made it home safely. God is good. Thank you all for continuing to pray for us and for all of the love you show Alaric.

THOSE SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2022

Sunday, August 7

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:

Shua Yang

Ushers:

Steve & Diane Marotz

Acolyte:

Maggie Faucher

Altar Guild:

Sue & Dave Prange

Scripture Reader:

Sharon Werner

Door Locker:

Andy Fibiger

Sunday, August 14

10:00 a.m.

Elder:

Andy Fibiger

Ushers:

Hazens

Acolyte:

Aidan Brooks

Altar Guild:

Kristine & Maggie Faucher

Scripture Reader:

Steve Hazen

Door Locker:

Dan Fibiger

Sunday, August 21

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:

Gerry Luebke

Ushers:

Ray & Shirley Ottman

Acolyte:

Elanore Faucher

Altar Guild:

Rachel Johnson & Julie Steele

Scripture Reader:

Todd Matte

Door Locker:

Diane Marotz

Sunday, August 28

10:00 a.m.

Elder:

Lee Gumm

Ushers:

Fibigers

Acolyte:

Katelynn Regutis

Altar Guild:

Shirley & Ray Ottman

Scripture Reader:

Mary Ann Fibiger

Door Locker:

Ryan Brooks



August 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	01 6:30pm Elders	02	03	04	05	06
07 10am Worship w/HC	08 5:45pm Bd of Ed 6:15pm Finance 7pm Council	09	10	11	12	13
14 10am Worship	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 10am Worship w/HC	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 10am Worship	29	30	31			