

PASTOR'S PAGE

Do the Words of Baptism Matter?

To give us God's name, the name that is above every name, Christ gave us the exact words to say at baptism: the name of the triune God who is three persons, one God: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

It does seem a little dangerous to be baptizing infants. The little tykes seem unfocussed; their hearts are going toward mamma's breasts, and they seem inattentive to the Christian way of life. ***But baptism is not the moment God judges our true, inner hearts. He already knows all about that, and it isn't good. Baptism is salvation from sin, and salvation is by faith—alone.***

The words that tell us what baptism gives are clear: "He saved us! Not by righteous works we do, but by his own mercy in the washing of new birth and making new by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). The words that actually "do" baptism to us are also clear: "go into all the world, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

When the moment comes for you to be baptized, your heart and mind don't rule. God's word is the only power. When the baptizer says the words, it is those words that make the faith. Before the words there was no faith and afterward, there is faith! Amazing! Faith is not there first, and then the words add spice. Faith is made by God like any new birth: out of nothing and merely by God speaking. But God likes to make new birth through things—and in this case, it is a word put into water and applied to the person (or the person applied to the water/word and "dunked"). New faith then clings to the words through the water since faith is always believing in something. The thing that faith believes in is the word of God in the form of a simple – first and final – promise: "shall be saved!" (Mark 16:16, or as in Titus 3:5 "He saved us!") That baptism/word is not trivial or interchangeable with some other words we may prefer. The words are specific, personal, and powerful. They are "clingable" words, especially in times of trial and temptation when we discover who our god really is. The words of baptism give us the true God to hang onto so that we finally fulfill the first commandment – no other gods!

Baptism uses these words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," in order to give you the hidden name of God. How would you know his name if it was never given to you? Likewise, baptism uses your own, personal "Christian" name given to you by God (through parents!): "John Jacob, I baptize you..." At that moment, God names you. Then in the next moment, God gives you his own holy and majestic name. He doesn't do that for everyone! When we have that name, we also fulfill the second commandment: do not misuse the name of your God! How do you avoid misuse of God's name? First, you need to know his name. Second, you use the name in fear and love—not to curse, swear and practice magic with it, but to pray to God alone in every time of need and give your thanks only to him.

One of the greatest promises of Scripture is Joel 2:32: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." When Paul describes baptism, he explains it this way: "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" You know about the beautiful feet of those who preach the good news. Now you also know that "faith comes by preaching, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). To give us God's name, the name that is above every name, Christ gave us the exact words to say at baptism: the name of the triune God who is three persons, one God: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Calling on that name is your salvation.

Have Blessed 4th of July!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Robert Steele

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



June came and went very fast. Alaric Hazen and Luke Matte graduated high school, and in May, Josh Yang graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a bachelor's degree in computer science. Alaric will attend the Master Gardner program at the UW Sheboygan extension and continue showing horses. Luke will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in Finance at UW-Whitewater. Please pray for all three as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

Pastor Steele and I attended the South Wisconsin Synod Convention that normally meets every three years the week of June 12th. The event invites the Pastor and one lay person from the church to vote on leadership positions and issues within the Missouri Synod. The South Wisconsin District President Dr. John Wille was re-elected with a large majority. It was very enlightening to see how the Synod manages "the business" of the church. Pastor Steele will be partaking in a retreat that was announced during the convention called "Doxology" (an expression of praise to God), which is much needed after the

last year splitting his time between two churches, coming out of a pandemic, and rebuilding his home in the midst of the worst supply chain issues the U.S. has experienced in decades. Please pray for his rejuvenation at this wonderful retreat.



On June 12th, we bid farewell to the Mengel family as they moved to Texas to find a more permanent home which they have not had for some time. We will miss them dearly and wish them the very best in their future. We hope they come to visit when they are back in the area. I'd like to personally thank both Jason and Jill for their service to Bethany while they attended the last few years, and we will miss seeing the children in Sunday School and church.



June also begins the budgeting process for the Council, and while we made it through the pandemic with strong financials it appears that the declining economy may now be affecting congregational monthly giving. In addition, and no different than most other churches coming out of the pandemic, overall attendance is down. First, I would like to say thank you to everyone who gives of their time and financially to the church. These are true blessings that keep Bethany moving in the right direction. Second, we're not in a panic situation here, but it does appear to be a trend that the Board of Finance and Council have been monitoring over the last few months. I feel that it is important to be transparent about our situation, and as a reminder there is a monthly announcement in the weekly bulletins which shows the giving vs. budget need.

As I am writing this, the streaming camera, sound system, and Wi-Fi upgrades are being installed. God willing, we should be able to stream our services again soon and reaches future new members. Many thanks to Gina, Andy, and the Elder team for the new "Welcome" cards in church to make it easy for visitors to learn more about Bethany. There are a few other things that are being planned/ worked on in the hopes of welcoming new members. More on that in the future newsletters. Please consider inviting friends back to church if you notice them missing. It is our role as Christians to keep our neighbors in the Word.

God Bless and to God be the Glory!

Todd Matte - Council President

JULY BIRTHDAYS

7-01: Cindy Bartz
7-04: Cheryl Prepster
7-05: Zane Willadsen
7-08: Bob Kuehlmann
Megan Fibiger
7-10: David Taylor



7-16: Paul Havlinek
7-21: Mary Ann Fibiger
Jim Madden
7-23: Lisa Willadsen
7-29: Kya Diehl
Liz Buesing
Laura Tershner

JULY ANNIVERSARIES



7-05: Dave & Sue Prange
7-06: David & Sara Hasler
7-12: Tom & Joan Schnettler
7-28: Brian & Kristine Faucher
7-24: Steven & Diane Marotz

If we missed a member's birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office and let us know.

BOARD MEETINGS IN JULY

Just a reminder that the Board of Finance, Board of Elders and Council will not meet in July. The Board of Education WILL meet however on July 11 at 6:30pm.

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.org. Please use your Designated Offerings envelopes during the months of July and August to support this mission. Thank you for your support!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



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

*(watch upcoming bulletins for picnic details and
volunteer opportunities)*

CHURCH PICNIC COMMITTEE LOOKING FOR DONATIONS

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. These items should be new or very gently used and can be placed in the basket marked "church picnic prize donations" 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!



Love INC of Sheboygan County

***** 6th Annual Putt Fore Love Mini Golf Outing *****

July 30 from 10am – 10pm at Harbor Pointe Mini Golf



**18 Holes of mini golf, Photo Booth
Raffles, Lemonade Stand, and
NEW Balloon Pop Raffle with a
chance to win Apple AirPods!**

All Proceeds benefit Love INC of Sheboygan County

**He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”
So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.
John 21:6**



Your support of New Way Weekly Blessings is a blessing for so many! Generous provisions have poured in to Love INC from partner churches, church groups, and individuals across Sheboygan County. The supplies shown above will help so many! THANK YOU!!

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

Sunday, July 3
10:00 a.m.
w/Holy Communion

Elder: Andy Fibiger
Ushers: Dave & Sue Prange
Acolyte: Aidan Brooks
Altar Guild: Lynn & Gerry Luebke
Scripture Reader: Lee Gumm
Door Locker: Ryan Brooks

Sunday, July 10
10:00 a.m.

Elder: Shua Yang
Ushers: Jerry Sabrowsky, Derek MacKenzie
Acolyte: Milly Menzer
Altar Guild: Liz & Ken Buesing
Scripture Reader: Sharon Werner
Door Locker: Steve Marotz

Sunday, July 17
10:00 a.m.
w/Holy Communion

Elder: Gerry Luebke
Ushers: Brian Faucher, Dan Fibiger
Acolyte: Elanore Faucher
Altar Guild: Debbie & Steve Perry
Scripture Reader: Steve Hazen
Door Locker: Dan Menzer


Sunday, July 24
10:00 a.m.

Elder: Brian Faucher
Ushers: Steve & Diane Marotz
Acolyte: Maggie Faucher
Altar Guild: Barb & Karl Kaeppler
Scripture Reader: Todd Matte
Door Locker: Patrick Johnson

Sunday, July 31
10:00 a.m.
w/Holy Communion

Elder: Lee Gumm
Ushers: Matte
Acolyte: Katelynn Regutis
Altar Guild: Barb & Lee Gumm
Scripture Reader: Mary Ann Fibiger
Door Locker: Ken Thompson

July 2022

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