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CHRONICLER



Easter Breakfast at OSL



H e I s R i s e n !

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

MISSOURI SYNOD

1900 N 4th Avenue E, Newton, Iowa 641-792-1084

www.oursavlutheran.com

Email: oursavr@windstream.net

Dear Fellow Redeemed in Christ,

Well, we've come to the final installment that I will write for the OSL Chronicler. This is a bittersweet moment, one with anticipation as well as sadness, joy as well as sorrow. One of the things that I thought I'd reflect upon in this letter is the greeting which I place on each correspondence that I send to you, the members of OSL. I picked up this phrase from a retired pastor in my vicarage circuit in Central Illinois; he used it in his correspondence to the congregation when he was substituting for our regular pastor. I've not seen many other pastors use it in their regular parlance. It's a reminder to me that **we are all equally children of God, equally saved by God's grace, through faith**, and this gift of God is not dependent upon our works, but totally on His love and His mercy. When we are tempted to think that we're somehow better than one of our fellow believers, we ought to remember that there's no separating us into classes in God's eyes.

We all have different roles, but the same Lord; as St. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians chapter 12: *"¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose."* Paul continues to his conclusion by saying, in the same chapter, *"²⁶ **If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.** ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."*

Let us remember that we have received a priceless gift from God – the forgiveness of our sins. Because we are forgiven, we are part of His family, grafted into the body of believers, even though we have no right to this privilege. Just as in the parable of the unmerciful servant, we ought to forgive others for their little slights, because we have been forgiven much by our heavenly Father. **This reconciliation is something that we've been working on for quite a while now**, both between some of you and me, and some of you with each other. I think that if we were to step back, take the idea of us all being fellow redeemed members in Christ to heart, this would eliminate some of the heartburn that's afflicting this congregation. The people of God need to **band together, stop squabbling amongst themselves**, and realize that the real fight before us is against the devil and his evil angels. Or, as St. Paul puts it best, in Ephesians chapter 6: *"¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."* **The evil one loves nothing more than to have dissention among the people of God** – then he can easily steal us away from the loving hands of our Father in heaven. Luther says it another way, when he describes "old scratch" (that's a term that Luther often used for the evil one) as working his woe, prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Instead of dissention among each other, what we ought to do is focus our attentions and our efforts on becoming stronger in the Word of God, bolstering our defenses, sharpening the double-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The only offensive weapon mentioned in Paul's armor of God is this Word, that is all-powerful, and does exactly what God intend and sets it out to do. **Study of the Word, and by extension, the Confessions, which are (100% of the time) a faithful exposition of the Word of God, should be our first priority.** It's wonderful to attend the Divine Service and receive the gifts of God in Word and Sacrament regularly – I don't mean to disparage this activity in the least! But there's more to the Christian life than this – we need to be immersed in the Word; we need to know it inside out and forward and backward. The devil, the world, and our sinful nature are going to try to trick us and tell us that the Word says something that it never intends. This trickery characterizes this sinful world; the only way to win this battle is to know it so well that we can't be scammed by false interpretations and claims.

So, fellow redeemed in Christ, I bid you farewell on Sunday the 7th of May. I'm moving to a different field of service in the church of Christ. But you will remain here. The one thing that I ask of you is that you **listen to your shepherd, both the vacancy pastor who will be here right away, and the pastor that the Lord of the Church will send you in His time.** Don't be quick to discount his words, because the Holy Spirit is speaking through him, just as if Jesus Himself were standing in your midst. Believe the absolution that comes from his mouth. **Learn from him, listen to him, believe what he tells you.** And in the process, you will be blessed by God in having your faith and your defenses strengthened against the evil one. God's blessings be with all of you!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Daniel M. Provost



Our OSL quilters have had 14 quilting days since the beginning of January. **Nearly 100 quilts were completed** as at least six quilts/day were finished. Many of those have been distributed locally to individuals, 5 were delivered to the Phoenix House here in Newton, 10 were given to the Red Cross based out of the YMCA, 6 quilts will soon be delivered to the Comfort House in Pella, 5 were taken to Mercy One Oncology, and 20 were donated to Mercy One for various other departments within the hospital. A few lap quilts were also made and donated to departments within the hospital and to a couple of individuals. **Thank you to everyone who helped make this another successful quilting season!** Please consider joining us when we resume quilting in the fall. If you enjoy food, fellowship, & laughter, stop by OSL on a quilting day even if it's just to say hi.

Gifts from the Heart Opportunity

2023 LWML Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin - June 22-25



Several ladies from Our Savior will journey to Milwaukee on June 22 to join with thousands of other LWML sisters to "Celebrate the Lord of the Nations." At convention LWML attendees share God's blessings with others through an ingathering called *Gifts from the Heart*. One of the mission recipients of this ingathering is an organization called **Phil's Friends**. Battling cancer twice, friends of Phil Z surrounded him each time with love and hope via care packages, cards, and prayers. After his recovery, Phil, his family, and his friends saw their fulltime purpose to continue supporting other cancer patients through care packages, weekly cards, and prayers.



If you'd like to donate any of the items listed below, the Milwaukee-bound ladies will gladly take them for the convention ingathering for the Phil's Friends organization. Those items requested include: Puzzle books • Journals • Playing cards (regular) • Fuzzy socks • Hats (knit, crochet, or baseball) • Walmart Gift cards* (any denomination)

Pat Shelton has been approved for a \$250 Thrivent grant that will benefit Phil's Friends. If you prefer not to shop, she is suggesting donating a Walmart gift card as her grant can only be used for purchasing the items needed and not for the gift cards.

Thank you in advance for your support of people with health issues.



On Saturday, April 15, over 20 volunteers helped clean the inside of OSL and worked on the church grounds. (That was a record at least since before 2008.) Both the interior of the church and the exterior look so nice! **Thanks to all of the willing workers for their hard work!** And, thanks to Thrivent for their Action Team Project to spruce up OSL. It paid for the Preen that was spread in the rock areas to prevent weeds and for the mulch which was put down in the prayer garden.

Great photos, Donita!

