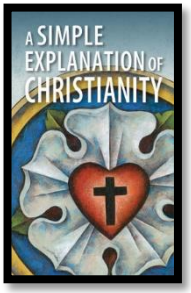


Learn the Language of the Faith

Life requires language. Beyond English, German, or Spanish, etc., life teems with vocation-specific language. Professors speak of MLA, TLA, the syllabus, and the précis. Truckers talk about alligators, bears, and cabbage (referring neither to animals or vegetables). Restaurant servers speak of tops, the window, and 86-ing menu items (referring not to spinning things, glass, or numbers). Lawyers reference amicus curiae, depositions, and the burden of proof. Nurses converse about EEGs, EKGs, MRIs, ECHOs and many more acronyms. And pastors may reference *incurvatus in se* or *simul iustus et peccator*. To communicate and navigate these vocations, you must learn the language.

Christianity, likewise, requires learning a language. It's a language largely lost by our culture, a language many Christians are abandoning in the name of experience or privatized religion. More and more Christians see less and less reason to learn the language of the faith. Instead, they believe they can shrink-wrap the faith into personal servings with individualized language.

Mind-forming terms like *order of creation, original sin, righteousness, contrition, absolution, justification,* and *propitiation,* and life-shaping practices like corporate worship, historic liturgy, Biblical teaching, and grace-conveying Sacraments, are abandoned. For what? For what sociologist Christian Smith has termed, "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," i.e., there's a god out there who wants people to be happy, nice, and well-adjusted, the definition of which is up to us.

But imagine if any of the aforementioned vocations did likewise! Imagine if professors, truckers, servers, lawyers, nurses, and pastors simply abandoned the language of their vocations in favor of their own self-chosen language. Imagine the chaos! Students wouldn't know from class to class what professors were talking about. Truckers couldn't communicate. Restaurants would become ridiculously inefficient (and customers exceedingly frustrated). Lawyers would see their backlog of cases explode. Nurses couldn't coordinate care for patients. And pastors would end up teaching a different faith. These vocations require a shared, communal language to function.

Christianity is no different. To understand, confess, and live Christianity, we must learn its language. In order to recapture the language of the faith and re-engage Christians in living and confessing the faith, we need to reconnect ourselves to the language of the faith. How do we do it? Begin with the Catechism. In 2017 our Synod published the catechism with an updated question and answer section to address the pressing questions of our age. I highly recommend acquiring a copy (I can help).

For everyday use, however, I strongly urge you to pick up a copy of the basic catechism from church (available in the resource center). This free booklet (titled: *A Simple Explanation of Christianity*) fits neatly in your Bible, on your night stand, or on your coffee table, and is a fabulous way to learn the language of the faith. Begin by memorizing the Ten Commandments – and their explanations. Yes, you can do this. Don't make it complicated. Focus a few minutes a day on one commandment at a time. If you have a family, review one or two per day. Then move on to the Creed and the Lord's Prayer and so on.

Try it. Don't disparage it as too facile or dismiss it as too demanding. This is about language learning. It's about connecting you to the community and the confession of Christianity. And it works! Learn the language of the faith and watch what happens! – Pastor Conner

The whole community is invited to Historic Trinity in Manning throughout the summer for a worship series that harvest Jesus' farm parables. Worship is every 4th Thursday of the month, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

TRIZION YOUTH GROUP

During our "off season," the youth group has been meeting at the Trinity parsonage for Bible study, dinner, and games. We're tackling some of the differences between us and our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. The new youth group season kicks off officially August 26th @ 6pm (at Zion). Youth group will regularly meet on Sunday evenings in Manning @ 6pm during the school year.

Significant Dates

- August 3-4 Trinity Youth Group Garage Sale (Trinity Parsonage, Manilla)
- August 5 - 5:30 Trizion Youth Group (in Manilla)
- August 8-10 5:30-8pm Trinity VBS & Financial Peace
- August 17-18 - Trizion Day @ Adventureland & Lock-In
- August 21 - Priscilla Guild Picnic & Potluck @ 12:30pm
- August 26 - Trizion Youth Group Kick-Off & Dye Wars 6pm @ Zion

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (August 2018): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

"I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 37:14)

Prophet Ezekiel finds himself in the valley of the dry bones and witnesses the connections of bone to bone and muscles onto the bones, and then speaks the breath of life into the bones. The valley experience prophesies God's work in Israel as He reconnects His people to Himself. Our God who first connected Himself to us in our baptism, continues the connections through His Word and through the Sacrament of the Altar. God in His grace then connects us to each other in His church.

CONNECT: An initiative to re-connect youth to the Church

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod statistics verify that more than half of youth confirmands become inactive soon after their confirmation vow. Even more youth become disconnected from the church after they leave their church and community for college and other adventures. A glance at recent Zion confirmation classes indicates that the trend is also true in our congregation. The Zion Christian Education Committee notices and cares. This fall the committee will explore a "Connect" initiative. Two arenas of response include: 1) high school students; 2) young adult—college, military, etc. The initiative begins with getting connecting information: emails, addresses, cell phone numbers, etc. to facilitate contact. The assistance of students and parents in providing that information is appreciated. The contact information will facilitate the sharing of Bible study, devotional, and other resources. College-age and other students living outside the area will be given information on where to connect with Lutheran churches in the areas in which they live and learn.

Key to the CONNECT initiative is prayer. Prayer partners and the congregation petitions will share our concern with our Heavenly Father.

Parental responsibility for the faith nurture of children does not end at confirmation or high school graduation. Parents are to continue to demonstrate a consistent worship life to their children and to bring children to worship with them. The church does not assume the responsibility for parents. The church provides support for parents as they are the primary faith mentors.

Participate in and pray for the CONNECT initiative. Share your suggestions and desire to support and participate in the initiative with the Pastors or with Joni Kienast, Christian Education Committee chairperson.

CONNECTED in Worship

God connects Himself to us through the Word in worship. Worship themes for August include:
August 5: God's Connection to Grumblers (Exodus 16:2-16)
August 12: God's Connection to the Discouraged (I Kings 19:1-8)
August 23: Worship at Historic Trinity: "Sing to the Lord of Harvest" Series: Parable of the Weeds

CONNECTED to God's Mission:

Thank you for the clothing donations to Orphan Grain Train. The donated items will be delivered to the regional Orphan Grain Train Warehouse in Ida Grove where they will be sorted for shipment to those affected by natural disasters, poverty, or other situations. The Zion Fellowship Club serves as our local connections with the Orphan Grain Train mission. An August delivery/work day for Zion volunteers at the warehouse will be announced.

Connected through Grace!
Pastor Riggert

Ghosts, Angels & Demons, and the BIG Hope

We've thought about ghosts, demons, and now it's time for angels. Already, there's a picture of an angel flying around in your mind. Me too. Our minds have pictures of what angels look like, but for a few moments we're going to think about how the Bible exhibits angels. The Bible is less concerned with what angels look like (even though the Bible has plenty to say about that (see Isaiah 6:2)), and it's more interested in what angels do. What is an angel's function?

What do angels do?

There are *at least* three things: 1) assist; 2) protect; 3) proclaim.

Assist

Angels assist, but I want to get even more specific than that – angels assist the Son of God, Jesus, at the final judgement.

"[Jesus said:] So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace." – Matthew 13:49-50a

"[Jesus said:] For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." – Matthew 16:27

The angels, creatures made by God, also assisted Jesus and demonstrated their allegiance to Him during Jesus' 40 day pilgrimage in the Wilderness (Mark 1:13).

Protect

Angels are not meant to be messed with because they can hold their own since they wield God's power. Angels have protected God's people by going on the defense as well as the offense.

Exodus 14:19 – covered the rear of the Israelites as they were moving toward the Red Sea while Pharaoh and the Egyptians pursued.

2 Kings 19:35 – angel wiped out 185,000 enemies of Judah.

Jude 9 – in a weird passage, the archangel Michael fights with the devil over Moses' body.

Do people have guardian angels? It's really hard to tell whether or not every single one of God's people gets assigned an angel; there's just not enough evidence to say yea or nay either way. Some places to look would be Psalm 91:9-12 and Matthew 18:10. We pray for angels' protection when we pray Luther's evening prayer: "Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me." But at the end of the day the foundation of our faith and security is always Jesus. So if we have a personal guardian angel…cool, but if not it's definitely not the end of the world!

Proclaim

But lastly, and maybe most important of all, angels proclaim messages from God. In fact, angel in the old Greek can refer to an angel as well as a (human) messenger.

Genesis 16:9 – an angel tells Hagar (Abraham's concubine) to return to Abraham.

Judges 6:12 – angel tells Gideon that God has called him to save Israel.

Zechariah 1:14 – angel tells Zechariah what to tell the people of Israel.

Luke 1:30 – the angel Gabriel tells Mary about Jesus' birth.

Luke 2:10 – angel tells shepherds about Jesus' birth.

Matthew 28:5-6 – angel tells women that Jesus has risen from the dead.
These are just a few examples of how angels serve as messengers.[1] What's hopefully clear is that there is a greater emphasis placed on what angels do over and against their character or their physical appearance.

Do people become angels when they die?

I haven't heard this talked about lately, but growing up I can remember times where people have hoped for their loved ones to serve as angels before God after they died. That's a noble thing to wish for your loved ones for sure!

But I have to be honest that there are times when that wish has confused me. The picture of a loved one transforming into an angel, I think, is one in which a stillborn baby you didn't get to know, a family member's body scratched to pieces from a car accident, a loved one's silent body sleeping after years of destructive cancer treatments, or many other cases – the picture is where they transform into something beautiful like an angel. Their bodies are damage free. They have no more stress. They've flown away from their bodies that are so unrecognizable. So they've transformed into something beautiful and dazzling and radiant like an angel.

I guess I get confused and weepy because when I remember my loved ones they were already beautiful and dazzling and radiant. Even when I imagine my friends' kids who died before they had the chance to grow up appear happy, funny, healthy, and beyond loveable in my imagination. I don't want them to change into something else, I want them back here with me the way they were. Walking, singing, reading, laughing, joking, playing, praying, yelling, crying, eating, drawing, writing, throwing, fixing, farming, sewing, cooking, hunting, racing, even fighting…just not…dying or transforming into something other than themselves.

The answer to *what happens to our loved when they die*, which God gives to us in the Bible, doesn't depict our loved ones transforming into angels, and that's okay. But what God does offer is something that should generate BIG hope! - Pastor Johnson

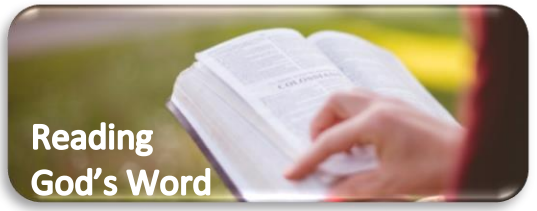
[1] If you're interested in seeing more examples, go to biblegateway.com and type in "angel" in the search bar.

Orientation
Confirmation

Wednesday, August 29th
7:00 p.m.
Zion Lutheran (Manning)

For all 5th -8th grade students

Parent and confirmand required to attend



Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

This prayer has been prayed by the Church for generations and is a prayer that we desperately need to continue praying today. But how, how do we rightly read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Scripture? The paragraphs below, from the updated sections of our catechism, begin to answer that question. I commend them to you as of first importance. Please carefully consider them, and follow up with questions! – Pastor Conner

1. The Bible is about forgiveness and life in Jesus.

To use and interpret the Bible rightly, it is important to know what the Bible is actually about and why God gave it. The main subject of the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that comes through Him. "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

Some see the Bible primarily as a guidebook for moral living, answering the question What should I do? Others see it as a how-to book for solving various human problems or questions. The Bible itself, however, invites us to read it as answering these vital questions: Who is Jesus Christ? What has He done and what does He continue to do to rescue me and the whole world from death and sin?

2. Scripture interprets Scripture.

Context is essential for understanding language. When overhearing one end of a phone conversation it is difficult to fully understand the words you hear because you miss the other half. In the same way, faithful interpretation of Scripture depends on giving the Bible a full hearing. When reading it, I need to ask, What is the context here? How do other passages of the Bible clarify my understanding of this passage?

The Scripture immediately surrounding a passage is a key starting point for interpretation. What situation is being addressed or described? What event or discussion has just taken place? What follows after?

Other Scripture written by the same author also helps in interpretation. Each human author used his own style of writing and unique emphases. To better understand a passage in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, it is helpful to look elsewhere in Romans and then to Paul's other letters.

Related Scriptures elsewhere in the Bible are also helpful, since the entire Bible is inspired by the same Holy Spirit. The truth of God in one book of the Bible clarifies and deepens the divine truth in another. When we find a particular verse or passage to be obscure, we should look to related passages elsewhere in the Bible that are more clear. As Luther points out, 'Scripture is its own light.'

3. Testament interprets Testament.

The Old Testament tells of God's good creation and our first parents' tragic fall into sin and death. It reveals God's care for His creation, His lordship over history, His wrath and devastating acts of punishment provoked by human sin. Above all, it reveals God's mercy, patience, and faithfulness to

generations of His chosen people Israel and His promise to send, through them, a Savior for all peoples.

The entire Old Testament precedes the birth of Christ, some of it by more than a thousand years. Yet Jesus says that they 'bear witness about Me' (John 5:39). We look at the pictures of God's saving plans that the Old Testament provides (for example, animals sacrificed for sin; the temple as God-with-us; David defeating Goliath, the enemy of God's people), and we cannot help but see Jesus.

Just as the Old Testament should be read in light of the New, so also many New Testament passages are best understood against the backdrop of the Old. For example, what does the angel mean when he says that God will give Mary's Son 'the throne of His father David' (Luke 1:32)? In the Old Testament, God promises King David a descendant (Jesus!) who will graciously rule God's people forever and bring righteousness and justice to the world.

4. Words do things.

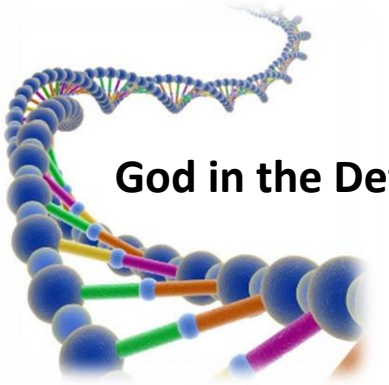
Words do more than just convey information. People use words purposefully: to instruct, encourage, warn, comfort. Bible passages also have varying goals. It is important to ask, What is the author of this passage trying to *do* to his hearer? Is he warning against a certain sin or danger? Encouraging the persecuted? Humbling the arrogant? Assuring sinners of God's mercy? Training Christians in godly living? Instilling the hope of heaven? The question is not simply of subjectively 'What does this passage mean to me?' The question is this: 'What was this biblical writer trying to say – and do- to his readers?' And, in light of that, 'What is God saying here – and doing here – to me?'

Amidst these varied goals, the Bible's chief goal must not be lost: to proclaim Jesus as Savior and to draw sinners to life through faith in Him. In view of this, Lutherans stress the twin emphases of Law and Gospel in Bible interpretation. With most texts, one can ask two key questions: First, how does this text point out my sin and my desperate need for rescue from death and divine judgment? This is Law. Second, how does this passage point to Jesus Christ as my divine Savior, who has worked such a rescue and promises me eternal life? This is Gospel.

5. God the Holy Spirit helps us.

Since the Bible is the very Word of God, our efforts to understand it should begin and continue with humble prayer. The Holy Spirit called us by the Gospel, and He will enlighten our study of the Word. This is truly a divine work, but it is also a gradual, lifelong work. Psalm 1 compares those who meditate on God's Word day and night to trees planted by streams of water, which bear their fruit in season. Trees do not grow in a week, nor does fruit from and ripen in a day. We should 'drink' regularly from God's Word, day after day, with prayer, persistence, and patience, trusting that God's Spirit will thereby help us to grow in our understanding and faith and bear His fruit through us – in His time.

God's Spirit helps us not only as we read the Bible individually but also together with fellow believers. Like the first Christians, we should gather in congregations, devoting ourselves to the apostles' teaching, to the Lord's Supper, and to prayer (Acts 2:42). Here, the Holy Spirit calls men to be our pastors, that is, shepherds or watchmen over the flock, who declare the 'whole counsel' of God (Acts 20:26-32) by publicly reading Scripture and explaining it (1 Timothy 4:13). In these ways, God's Spirit is at work, giving us understanding of God's Word – giving us understanding through God's Word – and building us up 'until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God' (Ephesians 4:13).



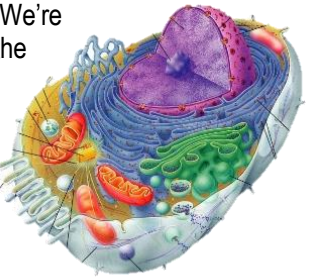
God in the Details

You've heard the phrase, "The Devil is in the details." In the following paragraphs, we're going to look at details, remarkable details, details inside the cell. And instead of finding the devil in them, we're going to find impressive evidence for God. In fact, the more details science uncovers, the more evidence we find that points toward God. A disclaimer before we begin: I'm not a scientist. I'm not a mathematician. I don't even play one on TV. So you need to understand that I'm not an expert, but I'm going to point us to experts. If you'd like details and want to enter a world entirely composed of details, I'll recommend some excellent books.

The reigning theory of origins (at least in secular textbooks) is Darwinian Evolution, which posits that all living organisms share a common ancestor – all life descended from a single cell. But what does it take to get the first cell? It's one thing to assert that all life descended from a prototypical cell; it's another thing altogether to offer an account for how that cell came to be!

In Darwin's day, before powerful microscopes, it was believed that the cell was basically a sort of globule filled with a protoplasm (think blob of jelly). So getting the first cell by chance wasn't thought to be too difficult. You just needed the right conditions and enough time.

As it turns out, however, the cell is exceedingly complex – and not just complex, but there's a shocking surprise inside: it's a miniature city. We're not going to dedicate any time to the various features within the cell (we might call them highly complex factories and well-ordered workers within the city) because we don't have time and I don't fully understand them. We're only going to talk about the building blocks of the cell: proteins. Proteins are amazing structures that are giving evolutionists fits and God glory.

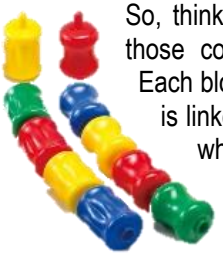


Here's how an explanation of proteins by Dr. Stephen Meyer (author of two outstanding, albeit complex, books on this subject - *Signature in the Cell* and *Darwin's Doubt*):

> Proteins build cellular machines and structures, they carry and deliver cellular materials, and they catalyze chemical reactions that the cell needs to stay alive. Proteins also process genetic information. To accomplish this critical work, a typical cell uses thousands of different kinds of proteins. And each protein has a distinctive shape related to its function, just as the different tools in a carpenter's toolbox have different shapes related to their functions. (*Signature*, 92).

So, each protein is a specific tool in the cell. Each tool performs a specific function for the wellbeing and survival of the cell. Proteins are required for the structure, function, and regulation of the body's tissues and organs. They can function as antibodies, enzymes, message carriers, structural support, and transport/storage. They are truly marvelous mechanisms. And to get life you need proteins. But proteins are made of smaller units called amino acids. These amino acids link together through something called a "peptide bond" to form a chain of amino acids. This chain

of specifically arranged amino acids forms proteins.

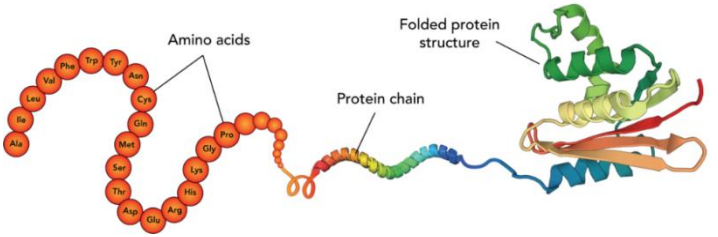


So, think of a chain of amino acids like those colorful childhood linking blocks. Each block is an amino acid. Each block is linked by that little knob on the end, which is a peptide bond. A shortish protein contains 100 to 150 amino acids, but they can reach to the hundreds and thousands. The cell contains numerous proteins. So, we need to get from amino acids to proteins to the first living cell. It's cheating to assume the first cell!

For now, we're only going to shoot for the protein (not even a cell; just the protein). In other words, we're going to make it easier on evolutionists! What would it take to form the first protein (without God)? Well, how does the cell currently build proteins? A chain of amino acids (called a "polypeptide chain" because there are many (poly) peptides (linking units) making the amino acids into a chain) is folded into various ways to form a protein. So, amino acids are linked by peptide bonds ordered just right to get just the right protein to do just the right job.

So, how does the cell know how to fold proteins? DNA. As you may recall from high school biology class, DNA forms a beautiful double helix structure with the four nucleobases guanine-cytosine and adenine-thymine. This is where DNA stores the information (the genetic code or blueprint) for building proteins. Here's how it works: a protein complex separates the double helix of the DNA to prepare it to be copied. This process of copying is called "transcription." A protein complex called a polymerase makes a copy (or a transcript) of the information code / the instruction manual for assembling the specific protein and then sends the transcript/copy on its way as a Messenger RNA transcript.

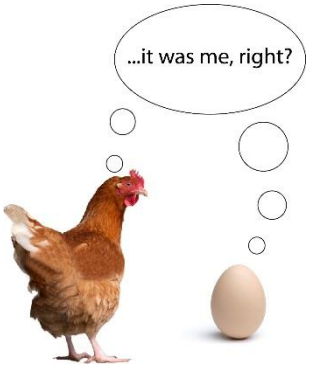
This mRNA travels through a molecular core complex that controls the flow of information in and out of the cell's nucleus (kind of like an eagle-eyed gatekeeper). It arrives at the ribosome (a chemical factory). This is where a protein is synthesized. During this protein synthesis, called "translation," mRNA builds an amino acid chain (specifically ordered) in accord with the transcript that was copied from the DNA. After this, the protein is folded into a specific shape to perform its specific function.



If you lost the thread, here's the gist: Darwinists have a chicken and egg problem. It takes protein compounds to produce proteins!

Biochemist David Goodsell explains:

> The key molecular process that makes modern life possible is protein synthesis, since proteins are used in nearly every aspect of living. The synthesis of proteins requires a tightly integrated sequence of reactions, most of which are themselves performed by proteins (*Signature*, 133).



In other words, it takes proteins to build proteins (a real chicken and egg problem)!

Can chance plus time overcome the problem? Remember, to get to a functional protein, the amino acids have to be arranged in a specific way. And then the polypeptide chain (chain of amino acids) has to be folded in a certain way. So we're moving from two dimensions (specified order) to three (specified folding)!

To get an idea of what we're talking about, imagine blindly taking one letter at a time from a scrabble bag, placing them sequentially on the table and hoping to form coherent, information-bearing sentences. What are the chances we could produce something like this – *In the beginning was the Word…* – from our blind draw? Not too great, but as it turns out, the odds are actually greater for producing this sentence by a blind draw than they are for producing a functional protein! And we didn't even have to fold our sentence into a three dimensional structure as with proteins!

I'll spare you all details, but a very smart mathematician[2] figured out the chances of getting a functional protein by chance: 10^{74}. That's 10 with 74 zeros behind it. That's the probability of getting a functional protein. In other words, only one out of 10^{74} polypeptide chains produces a functional protein. One out of a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion polypeptide chains produces a functional protein (it would take you over 31,000 years just to count to 1 trillion!). And that doesn't take into account the peptide bonds that have to form between the amino acids. I'll spare you the details, but when you factor in the peptide bonds, the probability of getting the amino acids assembled so as to form a functional protein is: 10^{164}!

Scientists estimate there are only 10^{80} elementary particles in the universe, and temporarily granting evolutionary ages, scientists (endorsing naturalism's billions of years) estimate there have only been 10^{16} seconds since the Big Bang and only 10^{139} events since the beginning of the universe. In other words, we haven't even had enough time for chance to produce one functional protein! And you need 250-400 proteins to build a minimally complex, simple-celled organism.

You can see why proteins are giving evolutionists fits and God glory. Such amazing specified complexity, such specifically ordered information demands an intelligent source and there's only one candidate with the credentials to pull it off, the very candidate evolutionists don't want to allow in. Evolutionists are clinging to hope that they may yet find some way or some mechanism to accomplish the task without God, a task that's looking more and more like a desperate search for Big Foot or the Fountain of Youth.

Despite what evolutionists may wish, specified information on this level requires a super-intelligence far above our own. The more we learn and the deeper we travel into the cell and its building blocks, the more the evidence points to God. Simply put: God is in the details.

[2] Douglas Axe

Preschool Praises for July/August 2018

We pray that you all are enjoying your summer and that you have gotten to enjoy some relaxing moments.

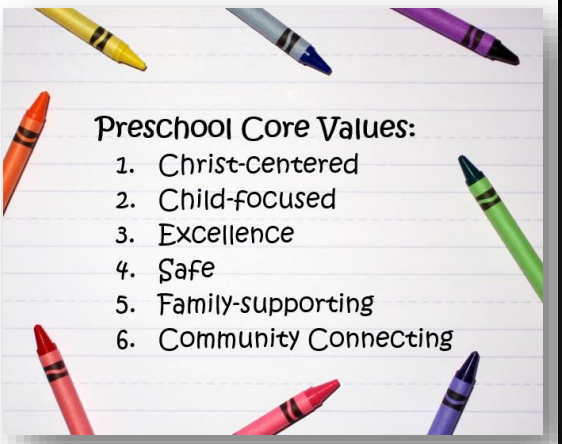
Another year of Preschool is just around the corner and planning has begun! We have a smaller class size this year and are still accepting children into the 3 and 4-year-old programs. We are hoping that in finding a driver that will work with Western Iowa Transit, we will be able to get more children in our classes. Please, if you know of anyone or if you yourself have considered the driving job (just 3 days a week driving children to and from preschool in the morning and afternoon from August through May), don't hesitate to spread the word and contact Bridget or the church office. Having a driver to help with transportation will be a huge blessing to our preschool and the children as many parents are both working and find it more difficult to drive their children to school.

As we prepare for preschool there are some needs that will be posted on our "Giving Tree" just as it has been in previous years. I thought it would be helpful to provide the list now. We are in need of glue sticks, Elmer's Glue (if you get a gallon, we can refill our smaller containers), Bounty select-a-size paper towels, scotch tape, money to go toward Scholastic subscriptions ($5 per child to provide a weekly magazine for the children) as well as money to be used to purchase gallons of paint and other supplies. We appreciate the support that we get from the church family and pray that you continue to keep us in your thoughts throughout the year.

Thank you and enjoy the last few weeks of summer vacation!

Blessings,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz

ZION
Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting



MARRIAGE MATTERS

Living Marriages Fueled by Daily Deaths

Consider these two statements[3]:

Marriage is designed to bless you and make you happy… right after it kills you.

Marriage is brutal on selfish people.

Go ahead, take your time. Linger over them for a moment. When I heard them I immediately perceived their truthfulness and lightbulbs began blazing in my mind. In order for marriage to live, especially to flourish, the individuals in marriage must die. They must die to self.

And this reminded me of something Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage*, wrote:

> Godliness is *selflessness*, and when a man and a woman marry, they are pledging to stop viewing themselves as individuals and start viewing themselves as a unit, as a couple. In marriage, I am no longer free to pursue whatever I want; I am no longer a single man. I am part of a team, and my ambitions, dreams, and energies need to take that into account.

Mr. Thomas is right. If marriage is to live and flourish, there is no place for self-assertion. In fact, self-assertion will kill marriage.

To be lovingly blunt, this is why marriages flounder, fail, and die – at least one member refuses to die this death. At least one member insists on his or her right to live independent from the marriage – and it kills marriage. There is simply no workaround; flourishing marriages are fueled by daily deaths. Flourishing marriages are fueled by these sorts of questions:

- How can I serve my spouse today?
- How can I meet his/her needs?
- How can I build him/her up?
- How can I (the husband) image Christ?
- How can I (the wife) image the Church?

The world focuses on this question: "How can I ensure my needs are met?" And, to be sure, each spouse has needs in marriage, but contrary to what the world believes, those needs aren't met by insisting on them. In fact, by insisting on them, we ensure that our focus will turn from the health of the marriage to the satisfaction of the individual. The focus will move from the one-flesh union to the flesh on the individual – and marriage will suffer because of it.

Flourishing happy marriages are fueled by daily deaths. In communication each spouse strives not merely to hear the words spoken (or misspoken), but to hear the heart of the other. In finances each spouse forfeits his or her whims for the sake of the marriage's financial stability (and the shared budget!). In decision making each spouse understands that decisions are only made as a *we* and that the other always has veto power. In spirituality each spouse understands that the other has sworn allegiance first to Christ, and each celebrates and encourages that.

Those unwilling to acknowledge these truths are being selfish and marriage will be rough on them. In fact, it will probably feel like war – open battle or trench warfare, but war nonetheless. Those who die marriage's death, however, discover a happiness outdone only by our joy in Jesus. Want to talk about strengthening your marriage. Come talk to me. Or check out these resources:

- www.loveandrespect.com
- *Sacred Marriage* by Gary Thomas

[3] I heard these several months ago from a man speaking on marriage.

Ladies Guild of Zion
July 11, 2018

Pastor Conner began the meeting with an opening prayer then called our attention to Romans 8:12ff. He spoke of dying to our sinful nature and living by the Spirit of God as adopted children. As children then we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, sharing in His sufferings in this present time and looking forward to also sharing in His glory. Christian Life Chairman, Margaret Backhaus read "An Apple a Day" based on John 15:15-17. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit…fruit that will last." JoAnn Thomas read scriptures that spoke about the bad fruit in lives, and Susie Schilling followed with scriptures that indicated the good fruit that would last.

President Buhr opened the business meeting in the name of the Triune God and with the reading of the LWML hymn. The mite box prayer was prayed as the mite box was passed. Roll call was answered by 14 members telling how they spent the 4th of July. The secretary's minutes were read and approved. Treasurer Mary Grimm gave her report. There were no circle reports. Circle #1 will have the next funeral. President Buhr reported on the IDW convention held at Camp Okoboji and shared the offering amounts, and the mission projects selected. She also shared how the pound silent auction was done.

Old Business: Joni Kienast spoke to President Buhr and thanked the ladies for the donation of cookies. The money taken in was $115.76. Susie Schilling moved that we donate $25.00 to Kinderfest. The motion was seconded and carried. A wide variety of kinds of cookies makes it more fun for the participants.

Camp Okoboji's quilt auction was held on July 7th. Quilts can be viewed on line at www.campokoboji.org clicking on the heart at top right of screen. Manning quilts are #'s 82, 103, 110, 119 and 121. No word has yet been received on the amount of money raised.

New Business: The August guild meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of the month—the 1st of August--at noon--with a potluck of salads and muffins/bread to be served. It will be guest day. Priscilla Guild of Manilla has been invited and Ladies Guild members are encouraged to invite others to attend with them. Hostesses will be Audrey Roe and Connie Ahrendsen.

Plaza bingo will be on July 27th with Cynthia Genzen as chairman, Becki Ehlers, Carol Kahl and Susie Schilling as helpers. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer and the table prayer. Darlene Vollstedt and Monica Christensen served refreshments.

Sue Puck, secretary

SERVING THE LORD IN
PANAMÁ
NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

July 2018
Vol. 3 Issue VII

Greetings in Jesus! Pictured here is Grace. She is seven years old and a member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Los Andes II, one of the most populous areas of Panamá City. In this photograph she is reading the Bible and participating in Bible Study. She is the only child at this church, but that does not stop her from being my reader in Bible study and helping collect the offering. After all, children are a part of the body of Christ!

Amanda and I are frequently asked why we do not want to send Ezra, our very energetic and talkative three year old, out of Sunday morning worship to play in the nursery. They think Ezra would enjoy playing more than sitting in church. And they are correct, he most certainly would prefer playing in a room full of toys rather than sitting next to mom for a worship service. They are also correct in that Amanda would be able to listen more easily to the sermon and sing along to the hymns.

However, the life of the baptized, the life as a Christian, the vocation of a parent, is not about what is easiest, it is about faithfulness. Ezra Joel, by means of his baptism, is part of the body of Christ and member of the church - a wiggly member, but a member nonetheless. What our Lord Jesus promises, offers, and gives generously in worship (his Word, promises, grace, and forgiveness) is something Ezra needs. Moreover, Jesus wants him in that pew - with all of his wiggliness. As his parents, we made promises at his baptism to bring him to church regularly and teach him the Christian faith. And you know what? Ezra is learning! He knows he meets with Jesus at church and gets to hear words of forgiveness. He loves to share the peace of the Lord each week making sure to shake every member's hand. He has his offering that he puts in the plate and helps hand out and collect hymnals every Sunday. Every now and then, we get a glimpse that the battle is worth it. Last week Ezra took his own hymnal opened it up and started singing. He was on the wrong page and the book was upside down, but he was so pleased. And so were we.

If you are reading this and are a parent of little ones - hang in there! Stick it out and wage the battle of Sunday morning in joy, not because it is easy, but because Jesus made a promise to you and to your children - because He wants your whole family in church. And if you are sitting in the pew on a Sunday morning without children, pray for other parents, smile, and maybe lend a helping hand. They do not need a reminder that children can be a handful, they need to be encouraged in the good work that they are doing. To God be the glory that even the littlest ones are heirs to the kingdom of God through Christ! – Pastor Gauthier

Each Wednesday we drive out to Sorá as a family. In the mornings, Brian works with Pastor Lopez, studying Hebrew, preparing for the upcoming sermon, and then visiting members of the congregation that do not speak Spanish offering catechism classes. After having lunch with the Lopez family, I teach two English classes with a member of the church who is retired expat living in the community of Altos del Maria. There are two classes with about ten children and adults in each class. These classes dovetail nicely into the tutoring program the church already offers. English is a required class in the schools, but very little conversational English is used. While we teach conversational English that will help children and adults speak English, we also use materials that reinforce the Sunday school lessons from the week prior. This is yet another point of entry into the church as the children slowly begin coming to Sunday school and then regularly attending church. It has been really enjoyable and I look forward to more classes! So thankful for this opportunity! – Amanda

SERVING THE LORD

ALL OVER ASIA

NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY

Julu 2018

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, Cassie, Chloe, and Charlotte Ferry

Back to Indonesia… as a tourist?!? What an incredible opportunity last month to visit Indonesia once again, although this time having to go through Immigration on a tourist visa instead of as a resident. Our partner church the Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI) asked us to present a workshop on worship, liturgy, and hymnody, and we were happy to do so. This was a direct tie-in to the ongoing work to develop (for them and with them) the first truly Lutheran hymnal in all of Indonesia.

We spent four days talking about why Lutherans worship like we do: that all the liturgy comes directly from the Scriptures; that "our" worship starts with Christ, and we respond to Him; how He comes to meet us in His Means of Grace, the Word and the Sacraments; and how our time in worship is reverent because we believe that our Lord is actually among us in real presence.

The four-day workshop gave way directly into a two-day hymnal committee meeting, led by LCMS Deaconess Sandra Rhein. Dcs. Rhein was able to help address some of the challenges faced so far in this hymnal development process, and to guide us into the next things to be planned, solved, and set. Our partners made some important decisions, such as how many hymns we were planning to include, which orders of service will be in the book, and what other resources we should prepare. The participants spent significant time using right away what they received in the preceding workshop.

They sang through scores of hymns, examining the texts to see which hymns were appropriate for a Lutheran hymnal, and making improvements to hymns newly-translated into Bahasa Indonesia specifically for this book.

To support our work financially, send a tax-deductible gift to: The LCMS, P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179

SELAMAT

Read more online at:
http://ferrys.asia

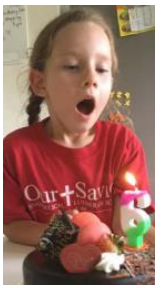
Our Indonesian friends are making great progress thanks to your support and partnership. They have already set another meeting update for November 2018, and are anticipating their new hymnal being published in 2020!

The Ferry Family endured another time of separation as Daddy traveled to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Korea while Cheryl and the kids continued settling in. Everyone managed to survive during the time apart, and lots of progress was made on the new "flat" or apartment.

They've also been spending more time out and about in the surrounding neighborhood: walking around the blocks, exploring the park across the street, and even getting more comfortable taking the bus… all things that we could never do in Indonesia the same way.

They've been taking full-time language instruction, with several hours each day being devoted to classroom training and practice with our native Chinese-speaking teachers. It's difficult, but paying off.

And Carissa had a special day during the month of June: she turned six years old on the 13th! She celebrated by getting to pick out her own birthday cake at a neighborhood shop, and had the special song sung to her in three different languages.



Thank you for your continued prayers on our behalf. The Lord has been gracious to us during our first full month in our new location, and we are grateful.

Or: Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034
Make checks payable to **The LCMS**, and mark them "Support of Charles Ferry." Gifts can also be given securely online through our online giving page at *www.lcms.org/ferry*.

Do you have a plan?

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me…

These famous words from Psalm 23 have been cherished by believers for millennia not only for their beauty, but for the strong comfort they provide in the face of death. We do not face its shadow alone, for Christ is with us. It must be pointed out, though, that King David didn't say, "*If* I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he said, "Even though…" He knew death was a reality he would one day face, just as it is a reality *you* will one day face. You *will* die.

Because we know this to be true, you need to plan accordingly. If Jesus is important to you, do you want your children and grandchildren to know? Do you own any property or have any assets that you would like individuals, charities, or your church to receive? Do you have questions about power of attorney? Do you know our church can help – for free?

We are blessed to partner with Christian Estate Planning Counselor Jim Schroeder who will come to your house to help you produce a written confession of faith, answer questions on writing or updating your will, help you with questions pertaining to beneficiaries, power of attorney, supporting your favorite ministry, transferring farm land, and much more – for free.

Ready to make your plan? Call Jim directly at 515-490-7371 or email him at jim.schroeder@iowadistrictwest.org. Or, if you have questions, visit with Pastor Conner. I know Jim personally and can assure you that you will be glad you contacted him.

IOWA DISTRICT WEST
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

Dump debt, make a financial plan, become money wise.

Nine sessions to change your life!

Sessions begin Wednesday, September 5 at 6:00 p.m.
Zion Lutheran Church, Manning
Childcare available

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

FINANCIAL Peace UNIVERSITY

Call 655-2352 to register and purchase your participant kit (or purchase online at www.daveramsey.com)!

Praise for Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University

Not sure if FPU is for you? Read what fellow Zion members had to say after taking it in the fall of 2017.

How has Financial Peace University changed the way you think about personal finance?

I need to be much more mindful of where my money goes, not just think it's ok as long as I have money in my checking account.

I no longer rely on credit; I'm using cash. And I'm being persistent about paying off debt.

It's incredible to realize that a person's financial status is all about behavior. Who knew?!? Sometimes we just need to pay the bills. However, the money left over needs to be assigned and not "wasted" on things that I "deserve."

We can manage money better. We can save, pay for things we need, and tithe, and do good things with our money.

How has Financial Peace University changed your life?

It has made me seriously look at a budget and follow it. It is way too easy to go to the grocery store every day and get something, which turns into a cart full. Using the cash envelope puts it all into perspective.

We are more financially hopeful and more focused on the legacy we will leave for our children.

It has given me hope that I can become debt free!

It has encouraged me to relocate my treasure to be God and His Kingdom; therefore, to use my money to lead my heart to find security in Him alone and not in earthly things or myself.

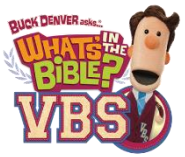
Would you recommend Financial Peace University to a friend?

Of course! I already have told lots of people!

Yes. We have learned more about how to use our finances in this class than we had in our lives to this point.

Absolutely! This class is a game changer.

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY



August 8-10

Trinity Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School
5:30-8:00pm
Free program & free dinner beforehand @ 5:30pm

Register by phone: 654-3031, in person, at the 4th of July booth in Manilla in Memoria Hall, or by online through this QR code:

August 12

School Kit Sunday at Zion
Before you head to the store to stock up on school supplies, come to church! Zion is again providing free school supplies for you and for your friends. So, please take what is needful for your family and what may be needful for your neighbors.

August 18

Organ Recital and Hymn Sing at Zion at 3:30 p.m.
Dr. J. Gordon Christensen, head organist and music director of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs and Dean of the Omaha Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, is eager to welcome you to an afternoon of sacred music performed by his organ students and himself at Zion. Bring a friend and enjoy the music and the hymns! Reception to follow.

August 29

Confirmation Orientation (5th – 8th grades) for Zion and Trinity at 7:00 p.m.
Confirmand and parent required to attend (at Zion)

September 7

Pastor Brian Gauthier, Amanda, and Ezra (missionaries in Panama) are coming to Zion! They'll be present for an evening presentation (watch for times). Come hear and celebrate what God is doing in Panama!

FINANCIAL Peace UNIVERSITY

September 5 – October 31

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Zion
Journey with financial expert Dave Ramsey through nine weeks of fast paced, information-packed financial encouragement that will help you dump debt, make a financial plan, and change your future. Call 655-2352 to register and purchase your participation kit (or purchase online at www.daveramsey.com). Individuals/couples who attended last fall can attend for free!

August Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. David Kusel
2. Justin Musfeldt
   Juniper Hinners (T)
   Judy Lingle (T)
3. Sophia Beck
4. Jade Dawson
   Madilyn Trost
   Maddox Weitl
5. Janet Brus
6. Matthew Alexander
   Zachary Grove
   Morgyn Irlbeck
   Alison Peters
   Beverly Rix
   Donna Rutz
   Grace Sextro
   Betty Pedersen (T)
7. Mitch Robinson
   Kevin Struve
   Katie Weitl
   Jessica Sebring (T)
8. Haylie Irlbeck
   Arlene Mohr
   Makenzie Trost
   Logan Vonnahme
   Jeff Sebring (T)
9. Mckenna Benton
   John Ferneding
   Mackenzie Jorgensen (T)
10. Rhonda Grimm
    Kent Vollstedt
11. Scott Dreier
    Ashley Ehlers
12. Kelly Ferneding
    Stan Musfeldt
    Audrey Roe
    Luke Jorgensen (T)
14. Elizabeth Alexander
    John Blum (T)
    Cole Lingle (T)
    Mark Segebart (T)
15. Addalynn Alexander
    Emma Reese
    EmmaLynn Salter
    Rick Spack
16. Cathie Segebart (T)
17. Jill Arp
18. Kason Jacobsen
    Carol Schroeder
    Paula Wulf
19. Jean Borkowski
    Miranda Hansen
    Shelby Heaton
    Randy Mahnke
20. LeeAnn Christensen (T)
21. Jacob Rosener
    Mitchell Walters
    Tina Miller (T)
22. Loretta Arnold (T)
    Ladelle Hanson (T)
    Will Jorgensen (T)
23. Karl Rutz
24. Jasmine Bauer
25. Skielar Riessen (T)
    Kristin Woebke (T)
26. Kadynce Ketcham
    Barb Hargens (T)
27. Mary Grimm
    Dorothy Kusel
    Coltan Lesle
    Linnet Nissen
    Leggy Thomson
    Gale Vinke
28. Brian Vetter
29. Justin Weller
30. Abby Bruch
    Cash England
31. Margaret Kuchel
    Jeremy Jepsen (T)
    Jeremiah Segebart (T)

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Anniversaries

1. Scott & Lisa Dreier
2. Dewayne & Cheral Buhr
3. Nathan & Chelsey Jensen
4. Robbie & Mary Lueth (T)
5. Don & Susan Lamb
6. Pastor Daniel & Paula Vogel
8. Walter & Joan Noelck
9. Duane & Mel Boell (T)
10. Daniel & Taya Vonnahme
12. Bob & Irene Genzen
13. Alan & Jennifer Morris
15. John & Debra Blom (T)
18. LaVern & Judy Bald
    Robert & Brenda Ehlers
20. Mark & Cathie Segebart (T)
23. Gary & Bonnie Witt
24. Curtis & Rachel Hofbauer
    Jerry & Mildred Brus (T)
25. Dwight & Jeanne Gruhn
    Tim & Joni Kienast
30. JoAnn and Earl Thomas
31. Daniel & Wendy Stribe

Official Acts

Baptism:
Tate Daniel Greving; son of Doug & Katie (nee: Musfeldt) Greving; July 1, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Confirmation:
Tyler Brock, July 29, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Wedding:
James and Katie Miller; July 14, 2018; Pastor Andrew Johnson

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Susan Lamb, JoAnn Karsten (Geogia Lohrman's sister), LaVerne Bald, Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Bob Henkelman