

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Belhar Confession, Articles 1 & 4

L: We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

P: **We believe that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;**

L: We believe that God calls the church to follow him in this;

P: **for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;**

L: We believe God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;

P: **We believe that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;**

L: We believe that for God, pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;

P: **We believe that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;**

L: We believe that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice,

P: **so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;**

L: We believe that the church, as the possession of God, must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;

P: **that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.**

ALL: **We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. Amen.**

*THE GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

THE SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks

Donald Fishel

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Acts 1:6-14 *(Pew Bible p. 112)*

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE ANTHEM

Now Glad of Heart

Robert J. Powell

THE EPISTLE LESSON

1 Peter 5:6-11

(Pew Bible p. 219)

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of the Epistle. All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

*THE GOSPEL LESSON

John 17:1-11

(Pew Bible p. 106)

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord. All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

*THE CONGREGATIONAL CANTICLE 111 (vs. 3, 4 only)

Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!

GELOBT SEI GOTT

*Praise we in songs of victory
That love, that life which cannot die,
And sing with hearts uplifted high:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Thy name we bless, O risen Lord,
And sing today with one accord
The life laid down, the life restored:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

THE SERMON

“ JESUS PRAYED ”

Dr. Swanson

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER (using “debts” and debtors”)

THE CHORAL RESPONSE

Six Fold Amen

Robert Lau

THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, AND GIFTS

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

Robert Lau

*THE DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow:
Praise Him all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Amazing God, you embrace what the world despises. You bring wholeness and life to that which is barren and dying. Use us, God of miracles, and the offerings we have brought, to bring life and health and hope to your world. Make us generous and faithful stewards of your mysteries, as we share the bounty which you have granted unto us. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

*THE RECESSIONAL HYMN 442

The Church’s One Foundation

AURELIA

*THE BENEDICTION

*Now may the grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith, abound in hope, and grow in love,
both now and forevermore. Amen.*

*THE CHORAL RESPONSE

May The Road Rise Up To Meet You

Robert Lau

*THE TIME OF SILENCE

*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

Leader: May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.

People: **May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.**

Leader: Praying, let us work for peace;

People: **Singing, share our joy with all.**

Leader: Working, for a world that's new;

People: **Faithful, when we hear Christ's call.**

Leader: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

THE POSTLUDE *The Church's One Foundation* Paul Bunjes
*Those who are able please stand.

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY by Nancy and David Blewett.

USHER FOR MAY: Betty Anderson

THE FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are given today by Marcy Forbes in loving memory of her mother, Helen Lang.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR follows this worship service directly downstairs in the Assembly Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. Hosting today's Fellowship Hour are Rosamond and Jim Curry.

GREETINGS TO ALL this day who have come to worship.

We want to get to know you, especially if you are a visitor!

Please introduce yourself to others sitting nearby during the passing of the peace. Following the worship, everyone is invited to share a time of coffee, tea and fellowship downstairs in the Assembly Room. (exit at the rear of the sanctuary, go down the stairs and past the Library to the entrance near the Sallman painting of Christ knocking at the door.)



**21
Years
Old !**

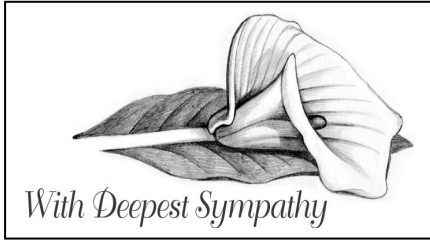
Birthday Blessings to Peter Gall, Mindy's son, who is celebrating his 21st birthday tomorrow, Monday, May 5th.

... Way to go Pete and Happy Birthday !

Covenant Choir Schedule



- ✓ Rehearsal on Thursday, May 8 - regular time at 7:00 pm (Sanctuary)
- ✓ **LAST REHEARSAL:** Thursday, May 15 - 7:00 pm (Sanctuary)
- ✓ **CHOIR APPRECIATION SUNDAY:** May 18, 11:00 am Worship Service
- ✓ **CHOIR PICNIC:** Thursday, May 22, 6:30 PM



IN SYMPATHY

DONALD EUGENE BRONDER

**April 18, 1932 –
April 25, 2008**

The sympathy of the Covenant Church family is extended to Ellie Walchesky upon the death of her brother a week ago in Florida. Services for Donald, age 76, were held last Thursday at the North Main Street Church of God with Pastor Kenneth Hall officiating. Surviving are his wife, Florence; three daughters; a son; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and two sisters (Ellie and Genevieve Winters of Georgia). May God's comfort be with family and friends.

Coming Next Sunday – May 11

PENTECOST SUNDAY/MOTHER'S DAY

11 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary

- **Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**
- **Mother's Day Tribute ~ Presentation of Carnations**



A SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP HOUR NEXT WEEK!

In lieu of the customary Pentecost family picnic, a special Fellowship Hour, prepared and hosted by Connie Brown & Co., will follow worship in the Assembly Room. Everyone is invited to attend!

**The Apportionment Offering and Outdoor Social
has been re-scheduled for July 20th.**

CHOIR APPRECIATION SUNDAY ***May 18 @ 11 a.m.***

Once again we will thank and honor Bev Antis, Choir Director, and the men and women of the Covenant Choir for their gift of extraordinary music! A reception, hosted by the Worship & Music Committee, will follow the service. Please plan to attend and extend your personal 'thank you'.



*May 18th will be the last appearance
of the our full choir in worship until fall.*

The Annual Church Rummage & Bake Sale—



Saturday, June 7th
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
(Fellowship Hall)

Calling all enthusiasts of yard, garage and rummage sales—it's Spring and time once again to be thinking about setting aside some items for our annual church rummage sale in June!

Please make sure the items you are donating are in good working condition and limit clothing donations to one bag per family unit.

Volunteer helpers will be needed to set up, sort, price, work as clerks, help with transportation of heavier or bulky items and cleanup. Hours are flexible - choose a day and time that suits your schedule.

If you have any questions about an item you are donating, transportation of heavier or bulky items or if you wish to be a volunteer helper, please contact Nancy Hitchcock @724-355-2486 or email her at nancy.hitchcock.iucw@statefarm.com. Thanks for your time and interest!

In The Life of Our Church

Recent Prayer Concerns:

Sara Voelker Recently hospitalized at Butler Memorial Hospital
(Nancy Hitchcock's mother)
Marion Campbell Released from Butler Memorial Hospital, at home
Phyllis Thoma At home recovering from pneumonia
Romaine MacDonald Improving, but asks to be remembered in prayer
Enid Dunmire Recuperating from shoulder surgery

For Continued Prayer:

Mary Elizabeth Goehring; Bob & Joan Moore; Julie & Bud Bruno; Brenda Keith; Dr. Thomas Stover (Mary Lee's brother in Texas); Bill Wilson; Vernon Swanson

Celebrating Birthdays:

May 5 - Julie Bruno
May 5 - Peter Gall
May 6 - Romaine MacDonald
May 7 - Taylor Gall

The Meaning of Prayer

by John J. Pilch of Georgetown University

In today's gospel reading, Jesus ends his farewell address with two prayers (John 17:1-19, 20-26). The first is concerned with the welfare of Jesus' own circle of disciples after his death; the second looks to believers yet to come. The message of the prayer reveals how the persons praying perceive themselves and God. This is captured in a traditional saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi*, that is, "how and what we pray reveal what we believe about the one to whom we pray."

Prayer can address seven practical purposes. It can be: (1) instrumental ("I/we want"); (2) regulatory ("do as I/we tell you"); (3) inter-actional ("me/we and you"); (4) self-focused ("here I am/we are"); (5) heuristic ("tell me/us why"); (6) imaginative ("let's pretend"); and (7) informative ("I have something to tell you").

John 17:1-5. The first five verses of Jesus' prayer focus on the core Mediterranean cultural value -- honor. The key word is "glory" or "glorify." Recalling that honor is a claim to worth and a public acknowledgement of that claim, we note that Jesus is praying in the presence of the disciples (and not in secret, as he once instructed them; see Matt 6:5-6).

This portion of Jesus' prayer is instrumental, that is, it is a prayer to obtain a good (honor) and a service (public proclamation) from God to satisfy Jesus' and his disciples' social need: to be recognized as honorable people.

John 17:6-8. This portion of Jesus' prayer is self-focused, that is, he identifies himself and his disciples to God, with special emphasis on the disciples.

John 17:9-11. Jesus now switches the focus of his prayer back to the instrumental mode. He asks the Father "to protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one" (v. 11). This is a petition for unity in community. The reason for requesting this protection for his disciples is that Jesus will soon be taking leave of them. What he expresses here in prayer, Jesus later accomplishes in deed when, dying on the cross, he entrusts his mother to the care and protection of a good friend.

Modern Western believers may consider this approach to Jesus' prayer as too analytical or too esoteric. But careful reflection on Western styles of public prayer reveals that very often in our culture prayers are composed with greater concern to impress or edify the human listeners than to stir God to action. I think part of the reason for this is that Westerners are convinced that they are masters of their own destinies and are expecting to look out for themselves. No one else will.

On the other hand, our Middle Eastern ancestors in the faith believed that they had no control over their lives. Only God had such power and control; and public prayer stirred God to act because it put God's honor on the line. That was Jesus' intent in this prayer from John's gospel -- to elicit God's action for the sake of his followers.

"Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." (John 17:11b)

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE

May 4, 2008

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians
By our love, by our love,
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

-- *Words and Music by Peter Scholte,*
"We Are One In The Spirit" (1966)

The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor

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