

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

May 2014

Fruits and Benefits of the Resurrection of Christ

Martin Luther

ST. PAUL WRITES IN ROMANS 4:25 that Christ was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Paul is indeed the man who extols Christ in a masterly manner, telling us exactly why and for what purpose He suffered and how we should conform ourselves to His sufferings, namely, that He died for our sins. This is a correct interpretation of the sufferings of Christ, by which we may profit. As it is not sufficient to know and believe that Christ has died, so it will not suffice to know and believe that He rose with a transfigured body and is now in a state of joy and blessedness, no longer subject to mortality, for all this would profit me nothing or very little. But when I come to understand the fact that all the works God does in Christ are done for me, nay, they are bestowed upon and given to me, the effect of His resurrection being that I also will arise and live with Him; that will cause me to rejoice. This must be brought home to our hearts, and we must not merely hear it with the ears of our body nor merely confess it with our mouth.



You have heard in the story of the Passion how Christ is portrayed as our exemplar and helper, and that he who follows Him and clings to Him receives the Spirit, who will

enable him also to suffer. But the words of Paul are more Christian and should come closer home to our hearts and comfort us more, when he says: "Christ was raised for our justification." Here the Lamb is truly revealed, of whom John the Baptist testifies, when he says in *John 1:29: Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* Here is fulfilled that which was spoken to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed: He shall bruise thy head," which means that for all those who believe in Him, hell, death, and the devil and sin have been destroyed. In the same manner the promise is fulfilled today which God gave to Abraham, when he said in *Genesis 22:18: In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...* Here Christ is meant, who takes away our curse and the power of sin, death and the devil.

All this is done, I say, by faith. For if you believe that by this Seed the serpent has been slain, then it is slain for you; and if you believe that in this Seed all nations are to be blessed, then you are also blessed. For each one individually should have crushed the serpent under foot and redeemed himself from the curse, which would have been too difficult, nay impossible for us. But now it has been done easily, namely, by Christ, who has crushed the serpent once, who alone is given as a blessing and benediction, and who has caused this Gospel to be published throughout the world, so that he who believes, accepts it and clings to it, is also in possession of it, and is assured that it is as he believes. For in the heart of such a man the Word becomes so powerful that he will conquer death, the devil, sin and all adversity, like Christ Himself did. So mighty is the Word that God Himself would sooner be vanquished than that His Word should be conquered.

This is the meaning of the words by St. Paul: "Christ was raised for our justification." Here Paul turns my eyes away from my sins and directs them to Christ, for if I look at my sins, they will destroy me. Therefore I must look unto Christ who has taken my sins upon Himself, crushed

continued on page 2

the head of the serpent and become the blessing. Now they no longer burden my conscience, but rest upon Christ, whom they desire to destroy. Let us see how they treat Him. They hurl Him to the ground and kill Him. O God; where is now my Christ and my Saviour? But then God appears, delivers Christ and makes Him alive; and not only does He make Him alive, but He translates Him into heaven and lets Him rule over all. What has now become of sin? There it lies under His feet. If I then cling to this, I have a cheerful conscience like Christ, because I am without sin. Now I can defy death, the devil, sin and hell to do me any harm. As I am a child of Adam, they can indeed accomplish it that I must die. But since Christ has taken my sins upon Himself, has died for them, has suffered

Himself to be slain on account of my sins, they can no longer harm me; for Christ is too strong for them, they cannot keep Him, He breaks forth and overpowers them, ascends into heaven (takes sin and sorrow captive), and rules there over all throughout eternity. Now I have a clear conscience, am joyful and happy and am no longer afraid of this tyrant, for Christ has taken my sins away from me and made them His own. But they cannot remain upon Him; what then becomes of them? They must disappear and be destroyed. This then is the effect of faith. He who believes that Christ has taken away our sin, is without sin, like Christ Himself, and death, the devil and hell are vanquished as far as he is concerned and they can no longer harm him. ~

An Emmaus Walk Never To Be Forgotten!

Pastor Wayne Juntunen
Esco, Minnesota

TWO DISCIPLES ON AN AFTERNOON WALK from Jerusalem to Emmaus had heard some amazing things that morning. Some of the women had returned to the disciples to say they had *seen a vision of angels, which said that he [Jesus] was alive.* (Luke 24:23) And some of them, especially Peter and John, who were with them went to the sepulcher and found it even as the women had said, but they didn't see Jesus (Luke 24:24). They were saying this to Jesus whom they did not recognize. To them He was a stranger.

Undoubtedly Jesus chose to remain a "mystery man" to them for at least two reasons—1) to give these disciples an opportunity to talk about their understanding of what had happened during the past few days; 2) to provide Jesus with an opening to help them understand what happened in the light of the fulfillment of the Old Testament, thereby making their faith more sure. (See 2 Peter 1:19). While they thought this "stranger" was the only one in Jerusalem who didn't know what had happened, in reality Jesus was the only one who did know what had happened.

What a special few hours for these two disciples! May it bring comfort and encouragement to each of you to know that Jesus cares about you as much as He did for these two. Though we may be as sad, disheartened, confused, or bewildered as were these men, Jesus loves us and will draw near to us and walk with us to encourage, enlighten, comfort and guide us in our walk of faith. Because we all see through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12), we constantly need Jesus to draw near to us. And He does so through His Word and the Holy Spirit. Life is filled with so many trials and tragedies only the assurance of Christ's presence with us can help us to go through them.

While the hearts of these two disciples burned within them while Jesus talked with them and opened to them the Scriptures (Luke 24:32), they still did not know this was Jesus speaking to them. When they reached their home in Emmaus, Jesus *made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.* (Luke 24:28-29) Jesus went in to spend some time with them and *as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.* (Luke 24:30-31)

Can you imagine how important it was for these disciples to invite Jesus into their home; even though they didn't know it was Jesus? Jesus, the gentle Lamb that He is, does not and will not impose Himself on anyone. Even with the Laodicean Church, of which we read in the Revelation of St. John, Jesus said: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* (Revelation 3:20) Jesus may walk with us, talk with us, open His Word to us, but until we long for Him to enter our homes, our hearts, our lives, we will never truly "know Him." It is a precious and blessed thing to know the Scriptures as they speak to us about Jesus. But we need to know "the Christ" of the Scriptures in a real, personal relationship.

When these disciples knew Jesus as the once crucified, but now the resurrected, living and actual Messiah, Jesus could leave them. And their personal experience with Him was so powerful, they hastened back to Jerusalem, probably as fast as their feet would carry them, to tell the others that the Lord is risen indeed!

May this glorious message of the resurrected Lord have such a powerful impact upon us that we, too, will hasten to tell others this Good News! Everyone needs to know that Jesus, our crucified Savior, is living. He longs to dwell within us for it is in Him that *we live, and move, and have our being* (Acts 17:28). Or as the Apostle Paul wrote: *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.* (Romans 11:36) ~



The Pilgrims of Emmaus on the Road
By James Tissot

The Perfect One

Elaine Valitalo
Lake Worth, Florida

LATELY I HAVE BEEN PONDERING the way things have changed in our lives since we were once young and seeking for truth and understanding and full of life for the future. Back in the sixties the young people would get together for song services at a home, maybe go for ice cream at Friendly's and afterwards discuss the Word of God. Nowadays, the young people use social media such as Facebook and getting together to fellowship is a fast disappearing art which is lost in the busy-ness of life. Isolation is not a healthy habit and it does bring on apathy and unconcern for our fellowman, a sure sign that love is waxing cold.

This world seems to grab a part of us into this vortex of technology. Technology is not a bad thing, but using it wisely is not always our choice as more new things come out to lure us farther away from where we should be in our spiritual walk. The mindless games, the games that promote violence, the games that promote all manner of evil in the guise of being "good." Do we even recognize how insidiously this creeps into our lives and takes up residence and consumes our every waking moment? Of course not; we are slumbering and sleeping, secure in the belief that we are not hurting anyone and we are being "good." Perhaps we are, but what about the watching and praying? What about the love of the soul? Do we recognize that time is short and the call will soon be made that the "Bridegroom cometh?"

Recently, with the decline in church attendance, the question was raised, "How do we get more people to come to the services?" This situation faces every church and denomination today. There is a falling away and it is so very sad to witness this. When we are saved by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our sins are forgiven and washed in His blood, we have the desire to reveal to others the glorious news of such a wonderful Savior. It begins at home with family and friends. The Bible says: *And when he [Jesus] was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him,*

Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. (Mark 5:18-19) This is an excellent start but it shouldn't end there. Jesus is calling for everyone to hear the Gospel message. He tells us to be sure of our salvation and to follow Him.

In Old Testament days, the high priests would sacrifice an animal for the sins of the people and sprinkle the blood over the congregation. This sacrifice did not have the

power to erase sin, but this ceremony was a foreshadowing of what was to come. It was a promise that the perfect sacrifice would be provided. The application of blood is still very important because we have been provided the Perfect Sacrifice, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life willingly and had NO SIN. The power in His blood is lifesaving. It releases a sinner from his sins as far as the east is from the west and washes his sins white as snow. Jesus is the high priest and He has shed His blood for us, for the sins of the people. The Bible says in *Hebrews 8:1-2: ...We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.* We must have faith to enter into this salvation with humbleness and repentance and through the laying on of hands we must believe the Gospel message that through the power of Jesus' name and His precious shed atoning blood that our sins are all forgiven. The laying on of hands with the spoken word is the application and it was used even in the old dispensation and it is still relevant today and very powerful to the thirsting souls that experience it. If our conscience plagues us, we have the PRIVILEGE and FREEDOM to confess our sins so we no longer have to carry the burden and weights. The Bible says: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)* Jesus Christ established repentance from dead works when He sent His disciples out into the world to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins. *Luke 13:3 says: ...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Notice that both repentance and the forgiveness of sins are necessary. This is the doctrine of Christ which had been established in the minds and hearts of His own disciples. The Bible says in *Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* Jesus Christ is perfection, we are not; and repentance is not perfection but it is the means by which we come to God, and faith is the established means by which we can reach God's grace.



The Resurrection of Christ
by Noel Coypel

***We can only hold up the Perfect One
to our family and friends, our coworkers and
those we meet along life's journey.***

We can only hold up the Perfect One to our family and friends, our coworkers and those we meet along life's journey. We must honor these means and doctrines of Jesus which He established through the Spirit of God to extend a helping hand to a seeking soul. We never know what another is going through or what burden they carry, but Jesus is the answer and we must bring the Good News to them and God will give the increase. ~

He is Risen as He Said

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children around the globe,

You have just recently read the account of Jesus' death and resurrection, and I would like to touch a bit more on the latter days after Jesus arose and met with His disciples. You can find this in St. Luke 24:13-35.

JESUS HAD JUST MET TWO of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, but they didn't recognize Him. He opened the Scriptures to them as they walked along. Then He broke bread with them. Then they knew who He was and Jesus vanished out of their sight.

The two disciples talked about how their hearts burned within them as they spoke with Jesus. These two men immediately went to Jerusalem to the other eleven disciples and found others that were with them.

They were excited to tell these others that the Lord had indeed risen as He had appeared to Simon. They told all that had happened on the way and how Jesus had broken bread with them. As they were still speaking, Jesus showed up in the room and the group was terrified, thinking it to be a spirit.

Then as they looked on with wide stares, Jesus spoke. **38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?** (As if He were asking, "Why do you think I'm a spirit?") **39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.**

The disciples and others listened and looked on and then Jesus showed them His hands and His feet. The group was feeling joy and amazement but yet could not believe this could be Jesus. Jesus saw their disbelief and asked if there was anything there to eat. He was given some broiled fish and honeycomb

and He did eat. He then reminded them of things He had told them before about all things must be fulfilled from Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him. **46 And [He] said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved** (was necessary for) **Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things.**

Jesus then instructed them to stay in Jerusalem until the power from on high was given to them. This was the Holy Spirit that would come on them and they would be given power to do the Lord's work.

After spending this time with the disciples, Jesus led them out to a place called Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples. While He was blessing them, a cloud covered Him and He was carried up to heaven. He went back to His Father God.



Jesus Appearing to Two Disciples
on the Road to Emmaus

HE HAD COME AS A little babe, grew into a man, preached and taught for 3 years, suffered greatly and died on a cross, and then rose again and returned to His Father having completed all that He was sent to do – and why? For you and me and all mankind. So that if we believe in Him we can live eternally with Him and God one day. We can be so thankful that Jesus died for us, and when we believe in Him what a joy we have awaiting us when He returns. Oh, that we would all pray to be faithful servants. May our Christian lights be burning for the entire world to see – Christ alone in thee. God bless you all, young brothers and sisters in Christ.

God's peace.

Concern for the Other

Jesus [washed their feet] to teach His disciples humility and love. Their concern was to be for **the other** as Jesus would demonstrate even further in His dying for them on the cross. This lesson is borne out for us today in all areas of our lives. Though we may not literally wash one another's feet we carry out this command of humility and love as we offer forgiveness to our fellow believers who are feeling the weight of their sin or perhaps have offended us in some way. We carry out this command of humility and love as we by our actions imitate the actions of Christ. We carry out this commandment of humility and love as we lay down our lives (figuratively) for the sake of **others**. Jesus taught His disciples that they would no longer live for themselves in this world but for **the other**. We are to learn the same thing as we live in this world.

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Spruce Grove, Minnesota

Jesus—The Resurrection and the Life

Pastor Chuck Bylkas
South Range, Michigan

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

John 11:17-27

IN THIS BEAUTIFUL GOSPEL, we see the patience and tender compassion of Jesus as He addresses a grieving Martha. Jesus had heard that Lazarus was sick, and yet He delayed coming to Lazarus for two more days, because He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus finally arrives at Bethany, Martha anxiously comes out to meet Him. At first, Martha complains to Jesus, **Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Many of us can identify with Martha's frustration. When we experience a tragedy, such as the loss of a loved one, our first response is often to ask God, "Why? Why did You allow this to happen? Why did this have to happen to me?"

But hidden within Martha's complaint is a glimpse of her faith. In her very words Martha implies, "You have the power that could have prevented this from happening." Her faith is further expressed in the next phrase: **But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.** In other words, "It is not too late. You can still help us." Jesus patiently listens to Martha and then

assures her, **Thy brother shall rise again.** Martha already knows this. She knows of the great event that is promised on the Last Day. "But what about the here and now? What can help me deal with the pain of this loss?"



Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live... Jesus gives Martha the answer to all her problems, though she is asking the wrong questions. The question Martha should be asking is not what, when or why, but *who*? "Who can help me in my time of need?" The Resurrection is not merely an event that will happen in the distant future. The Resurrection is embodied in the person who now stands before Martha. It is Jesus Christ Himself. He is the One who shed His blood on Calvary's cross for the forgiveness of our sins. He is the One who swallowed up death in victory. He is the One who continues to help us in every time of need. All those who by faith embrace the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus have life, right here and right now. May God grant us grace to continue believing in the One who is the Resurrection and the Life. ~

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Revelation 5:12



Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
by Francisco de Zurbarán

This is an ascription of praise to Jesus, your Jesus, as the Sacrifice for sin, the Atonement of the Church, the Savior of His body. Jesus, who died for your sins, is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. We never can ascribe too much to Jesus. But He is worthy also to be BELIEVED, in preference to Satan, unbelief, the world, or appearances; to be TRUSTED with all, for all, before all; to be LOVED, more than any other, in opposition to any other that would rival Him; to be obeyed, though He commands us to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye; to be FOLLOWED, wherever He may lead us, through evil report and good report; to be PREFERRED, to ease, pleasure, wealth, health, to anything and everything. Jesus is worthy to be our Example, our Confidant, our King, and our All.

James Smith

Our Blessed Heritage

History of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Tapiola, Michigan

Glenn Chapman & Earl Kaurala

Introduction

In the 1880s the first pioneers rowed their way up the Sturgeon River and settled on the shores of Otter Lake. They were not only confronted with the problem of physical survival in a forbidding wilderness, but also keenly felt the hunger for the nourishment of the soul. They realized that God, in His infinite wisdom, had provided them with their daily manna in the form of plentiful game and fish. Man, however, cannot live by bread alone; therefore, the need of a spiritual leader became apparent.

All the resources of land and forests were there for them to develop, but this demanded toil and faith. Because God is always attentive to the supplications of those who call on Him for help, He sent another settler into their midst, Stephen Savela, who had been a lay preacher in Finland, the homeland of all these settlers.

In these days of hardship to gain a foothold for a living, it was unthinkable to pay the preacher for his services. The concern of all was the salvation of the soul. Being a lay preacher, the duties of Stephen Savela were confined to preaching the Word, baptisms and burials, which he continued to his death during January 1907.

The Early "Churches"

For many years building a church was inconceivable due to the limited population and means of the community. This was solved by mutual agreement. The home of each member would become the house of God by turn on each Sunday. Long wooden benches were made for pews, and the small homes were filled to capacity with worshippers. Not all were godly people, but for diversion and fellowship with neighbors, all attended these meetings. Many of the people who have passed on to their reward left these humble gatherings rejoicing in having found their Lord and Savior there.

These early pioneers considered the day when one of them must part from this life, and his earthly remains be returned to the earth from whence they came. It was agreed that the first settler to pass on would have his remains deposited onto his own ground. This would thenceforth be the cemetery for the whole community of Tapiola and Askel. The grim reaper made his first visit in Askel calling Joseph Karki to his rest. In a beautiful setting on the hillside between Otter Lake and Askel Road, the cemetery is situated in a restful spot in the woods. Only a few of the descendents of the original settlers are buried there today.

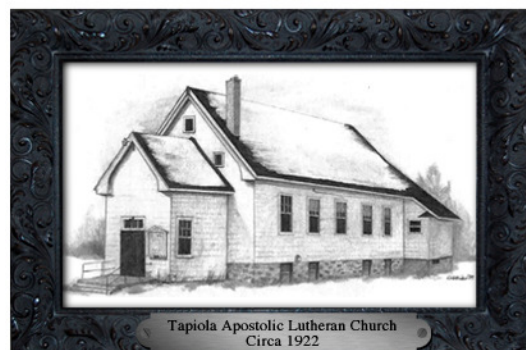
Upon the death of Stephen Savela, the congregation was left without a shepherd and could not afford to hire a fulltime preacher from the closest parish in Calumet. This would have been impractical because of lack of roads and the means of travel. Two men were chosen, John Naasko and Olaf Savela (son of Stephen), and lots were drawn to decide which would serve as the minister of the Word.

Neither had any theological training, nor any background, but the need was desperate. Both bowed to God's will, but the lot fell on Olaf. The first Sunday when he went to deliver his sermon before God and his tiny flock, the task appeared so enormous in his unprepared state that he wept. He called upon his fellow Christians to pray to God to send them the bidden manna. Power was endued from on high and, to the amazement of all, he began to preach with great strength. He continued to preach every Sunday, as his father had, and the flock grew.

The Church Construction

About this time, a vast forest fire went through the area east of the Otter River. It burnt thousands of acres of pine slashing, exposing in its place a fertile farming area which was immediately settled. Christianity spread and the duties of the minister multiplied. It was decided before the twenties that the parson should be compensated for his services. His monthly wage was placed at \$6.00. Also, the community had grown to the extent that homes no longer were big enough to accommodate the church members. The subject was first presented at an informal gathering in the general store of Carl Olson (now Karvakko's Market). There, a new settler and disciple, Paul Hendrickson, voiced the daring plan. Sitting on nail kegs in the rear of the store, the people decided to call a meeting to talk of building a centrally located place of worship. At the time of this first meeting, the funds in the bank account of the congregation amounted to \$41.82.

The meeting was called for February 26, 1922, and was attended by the fathers of the entire congregation. With a single mind and purpose, all agreed to take part in the construction of the church, giving of their labor, material and money. John Kurtti donated and deeded the lot for the building. John Kuovinen allowed logs to be cut from his stand of virgin hemlock. The cutting and gathering of the logs was done by willing hands, and Carl Olson and his sons provided their sawmill for the preparation of the lumber. Wherever help was needed, manpower was available. Funds were made sufficient to hire an architect and lead carpenter. By June 12, 1922, work was begun on the site. The size of the building was 28 feet wide and 67 feet long, on 12 foot studs.



The Fire

The wholehearted effort and energy can best be summed up by the fact that in September of the same year, the opening services were held in the completed church. There was no debt and more funds were left than there had been in the beginning. Without any mandatory pressure on donations at any time, the church has been blessed with sufficient funds to operate without hardship. Even in 1951, when the building was badly damaged by fire, it was restored by sources unforeseen to better condition than it had been formerly.

A Constitution

Before the construction of the church, the congregation operated without the benefit of formal organization. Very little was on record of the operations except the maintenance of the cemetery. With the advent of the church, an elected board was necessary. It dealt with the needs of the congregation. A constitution with bylaws was drawn. It set a clear understanding to every member of their rights and restrictions in the use of the church. This is still today a thoroughly applicable masterpiece of forethought. It has needed no amendments, nor have any rules been repealed, as it is based on the Word of God.

The Speakers in the 1900s

Olaf Savela continued serving the congregation until the late 1920s when, due to the infirmity of old age, he was relieved by the Reverend John Oberg. Along with serving the parish in Laurium, he ministered to the Tapiola Church. He was replaced due to old age by Reverend Evert Maatala from South Range. He served Tapiola in conjunction with other congregations. Upon Reverend Maatala's

death in 1936, Reverend Andrew Mickelson of Hancock began to hold services with the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month. He also conducted confirmation classes prior to each service. On the fourth Sunday of each month, Reverend Waino Karvonen of Laurium delivered the spiritual message. The congregation has invited guest preachers from other congregations to speak between these two Sundays. Aside from these regular functions, Sunday School and Wednesday evening Bible studies have regularly been conducted. In 1969, Reverend Richard Barney was called as pastor of the congregation, a position he held until 1991. Pastor Kenneth Storm has been serving since Pastor Barney's departure.



Conclusion

May the determination, cooperation and faith in God that our forefathers represented in this church be an example for future generations to build upon. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Word of God shall remain forever. ~

Truth Is a Person

Let me say boldly that it is not the difficulty of discovering truth, but the unwillingness to obey it, that makes it so rare among men. Our Lord said, "I am the Truth." And again He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Truth, therefore, is not hard to find for the very reason that it is seeking us! So we learn that Truth is not a thing for which we must search, but a Person to whom we must hearken! In the New Testament, multitudes came to Jesus for physical help, but only rarely did one seek Him out to learn the Truth. The whole picture in the gospels is one of a seeking Savior, not one of seeking men. The Truth was hunting for those who would receive it, and relatively few did, for "many are called, but few are chosen."

A.W. Tozer

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

John 14:1-3

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Table Manners

Pastor Andy Kandoll
Champion, Michigan

Thy children (shall be) like olive plants round about thy table. Psalm 128:3



Olive Groves in Capri

ONE MOTHER'S DAY, WE TOOK our four small children and my wife's mother out to eat at a nice buffet restaurant. We sat in a large corner booth. The food was great, the children were extremely lively, and the managers smiled every time they passed by and refilled our soft drinks. The kids were so quick and excited; they were in flying mode.

Every time we grabbed one to sit them down, another would slide under the table, over the back or slither through and out to get more food or dessert or to run. We were at our wit's end. We said, "No more restaurants until these kids learn to behave."

What to do? *My wife and I decided that we had to teach them table manners.*

When I grew up, our family ate Sunday dinner together after church whenever possible. The table was set; a nice roast or chicken, potatoes, a vegetable and rolls were made. My father said the prayer, "Dear heavenly Father, bless us and these thy gifts to our bodies and Thy service. In Jesus' name, Amen." Other days, because of our logging and farming schedules, my mother usually prepared food and we got it from the stove as we came in.

My wife and I decided that we had to do something similar for every day. After I came home from work, Ruth made a nice dinner, the table was set, and we said a prayer, sometimes taking turns. We ate, asked the kids about their day and gave each one a turn to talk. Sometimes we had to arbitrate disputes; other times there were school or playground issues. When the meal was over, each one was told to say, "Thank you! May I please be excused?" We answered, "You're welcome. You may be excused." Then they picked up their empty plate, silverware and cup, and brought them to the sink.

Table Rules:

- If someone started eating before prayer, they had to say the prayer.
- Proper manners at all times. "Please" and "Thank you" for passing food, etc.
- In discussion, no one was allowed to use the word "hate." State the problem, no name-calling.
- You had to take at least one bite of any food before you could say, "No, thank you. I don't like it."

The same rules were used in public as at home. Bow our heads and say grace before the meal. Ask to be excused from the table for any reason, sit properly and say "Please" and "Thank you." Rule #4 led to a funny incident where one of the girls refused to eat fish. She sat for over an hour without eating. Finally, I persuaded her to take one bite. As she swallowed, she immediately threw up all over her plate. We had to modify that rule!

Several years passed with very few restaurant visits. On the way to Minnesota when the older children were about eight to ten, we stopped at Perkins in Superior, Wisconsin. We were given a table in the back. An older couple came in and was seated at the next table. When they saw us with the four children, their faces fell. Our children behaved like angels in public for the first time ever. As the couple finished their meal, they came over to our table and told us, "When we saw you here with the children, we almost left the restaurant. Your children behaved so beautifully, you restored our faith in children! Thank you so much!"

All the hard work and aggravation had paid off! ~