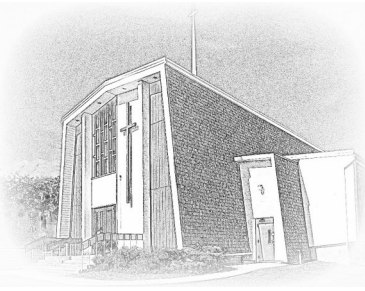


HIGHWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

May 2023

The Newsletter of Highwood Lutheran Church



Rev. Michael Wellman

Pastor

Rick Vander Woude,

Music Director

Liz Northam

Office Secretary

Highwood Lutheran Church

419 Northmount Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2K 3H7

Office Phone:
403-289-8206

Pastor's Phone:
403-282-1772

Office Email:
secretaryhlc@outlook.com

Pastor Email:
pastorhlc@outlook.com

Organist Email:
highwoodorganist@gmail.com

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[https://us04web.zoom.us/
j/4111340591](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4111340591)

Zoom by Telephone

Dial: 1-587-328-1099

Meeting ID: 411 134 0591 #

Passcode: 592794 #

PASTOR'S MESSAGE FOR MAY

ETHICAL QUESTIONS—PART 2

Part 1 of "Ethical Questions" can be found in the April issue of the Highwood Highlights

Coming to terms with conflicting ethics is the biggest challenge of doing ethics. This past year, I have had more calls and discussions regarding ethical questions than in all my previous years of ministry combined. I am thankful for my ethics training under former Vancouver General Hospital ethicist, Rev. Dr. Terry Anderson. In his instruction on Christian Ethics, he works through a system using what he calls *basepoints*. By defining and exploring ethical markers, he presents a method to engage and facilitate ethical decision-making. In his book, *Walking the Way; Christian Ethics as a Guide*, Anderson posits that our moral decisions should be grounded in a deep and personal relationship with God. This relationship can serve as a primary *basepoint* for our ethical reflections and decision-making. Anderson goes on to emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to ethics, which considers not only our relationship with God but also the broader social context and the needs of others. Doing so reveals that vital basepoints, for example, love, justice, compassion, and honesty, can be common to many ethical frameworks. Recognizing that different individuals may have similar basepoints derived from their own diverse experiences and values can become a place of starting relationships. From that relationship, further ethical communications can grow.

As Lutherans, we have a significant influence from the ethical work of St. Augustine. He defined sin as a turning away from God and argued that the only way to achieve trustworthy moral guidance was to place one's moral compass outside oneself and seek guidance from God. That becomes our operations principle to start the work of doing ethics, which guides our choice and prioritization of our basepoints as we engage a structured method of ethics. It colours our options as we look for ways to address the previously mentioned crisis of authority in addressing ethics, discussing one's basepoints, and managing the difficulty in finding sources of moral guidance and authority that are shared and seen as legitimate and trustworthy.

Many traditional sources of authority, such as religious institutions or political leaders, have come under scrutiny and criticism in recent years. This has led to a sense of moral confusion and uncertainty, with individuals struggling to find a reliable basis for making ethical decisions, so ethical decision-making involves a process of discernment that begins with an awareness of one's basepoints and helps build an understanding of the ethical principles that flow from them. Anderson emphasizes the importance of engaging in ongoing reflection and dialogue with others to refine an ethical framework and ensure that it remains relevant in our changing life circumstances.

We understand that no decision will ever be perfect in a broken world. When doing ethical decision-making, the most important thing to remember is God's forgiveness to repentant sinners through the means of his word and his servant, the pastor. In the Lutheran Church, absolution is seen as an extension of our baptism, where God washes away our sins and gives us new life in Christ. We look to biblical passages where Jesus gives his disciples the authority to forgive or retain sins (John 20:22-23) and where James exhorts Christians to confess their sins to one another and pray for healing (James 5:16).

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Pastor's Message continued from Page 1

Absolution is not a human work or merit. Grace is a gift of God and presents mercy beyond any notion of satisfaction or penance imposed by human authority, emphasizing that only God can forgive sins through his word. Absolution is a precious treasure that assures us of God's love and restores us to fellowship with him and with one another.

Pr. Mike

Book reference - available free on archive.org

Walking the Way: Christian Ethics as a Guide
Terence R. Anderson Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993.

TRINITY SUNDAY

The doctrine of the Trinity is the Christian belief that God is one being, existing through three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are co-equal and co-eternal, meaning they are all equally divine and have always existed.

The concept of the Trinity can be traced back to the teachings of Christ and the writings of the New Testament. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches his disciples to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The New Testament also includes many references to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working together in the redemption and salvation of humanity.

The doctrine of the Trinity was further developed and articulated by the early Church Fathers, who sought to understand and explain the nature of God as revealed in the Bible. The concept of the Trinity has continued to be a central part of Christian doctrine and is affirmed in the three creeds of the church, the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed, and is confessed as a statement of faith commonly recited by Christians worldwide.

Despite being a foundational doctrine of Christianity, the Trinity is not easily understood or explained and has been the subject of much theological debate and contemplation throughout the history of the Church. Some have likened it to a mystery that we may never fully comprehend, which we can still come to know and experience through faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Trinity Sunday
June 4, 2023

THE HARDEST GIFT

Many people struggle with accepting love or grace from God. They may feel unworthy, guilty, ashamed, or fearful of God's judgment. They may have been hurt by others who claimed to represent God, or they may have doubts about God's existence or goodness. They may think that they must earn God's favour by doing good deeds, following rules, or avoiding sins. The truth is that love or grace from God is the hardest gift to receive and the gift we most need.

Love or grace from God is the hardest gift to receive because it goes against our human nature. We are used to economic exchanges, which makes for conditional love, where we have to meet certain expectations or standards to be loved. We are used to transactional relationships, where we must give something in return for what we receive. We are used to performance-based evaluations, where we are judged by our results or achievements. But God's love or grace is not like that. It is unconditional, free, and unmerited. It is "not" based on what we do or don't do. Instead, it is based on who God is and what He has done for us.

Love or grace from God is the gift we most need because it is the source of spiritual healing and transformation. Without God's love or grace, we would be lost in our sins, broken by our wounds, and stuck in our patterns. Without God's love or grace, we would have no hope, no peace, no joy, and no purpose. Without God's love or grace, we would be separated from Him forever. With God's love or grace, we can be forgiven, restored, and renewed. With God's love or grace, we can have eternal life, abundant life, and meaningful life. With God's love or grace, we can be reconciled with Him and with others.

The modern culture makes it seem easier to reject or resist God's love or grace than to receive it with gratitude and humility. Remember, there is no such thing as kingdom bucks or merits. There is no point in trying to earn or repay God's love or grace. Instead, we respond to grace and love with faith and obedience, as we follow Christ. Our lifelong challenge is to not take for granted or abuse God's love or grace but cherish it and share it with others. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Something to Smile About

A church had a picnic and invited the entire community to come. The Pastor placed a basket full of apples on one end of a table with a sign saying, "Take only one apple please - Remember that God is watching."

On the other end of the table was a plate of cookies where one of the children had placed a sign saying, "Take all the cookies you want -- God is watching the apples."

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."



MAY BIRTHDAYS

Mark Anderson
 James Berwanger
 Anna Berwanger
 Jack Davis
 Ron Forth
 Ava Jean Hanson
 Eleanor Lahoda
 Jim Rasmussen
 Norman Wong

OUR HIGHWOOD FAMILY

Meet Art Wildeman



I was born and raised on a farm near a small hamlet called Esk Saskatchewan. My parents were members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Esk. I was baptized and confirmed there. After high school I moved to Saskatoon where I started my work career as a Purchasing Agent. I worked at several places before officially retiring in 1995. After my retirement I was a retail meat cutter for eight years. I finally retired completely after doing small contract jobs, that is building fences, painting, and small renovations.

I have been a Lutheran all my life. My last congregation before relocating to Calgary was New Hope Lutheran in Regina. As you all know there are always a lot of things that are required to be done in any congregation. I did everything from changing light bulbs to cutting the lawn and even painting. There were two things that I did get quite heavily involved with. One was that I trained to become a Stephen Minister. During that time, I had a client in which I visited more than two hundred times with

him. I can tell you that was the most rewarding experience that anyone can ever have. During my time at New Hope Lutheran Church we did experience a pastor shortage which lasted for about six months. During that time services were led by lay people. I was one of those people that led the service. Most all sermons were prepared for us by another pastor from another Lutheran Church. Although we did have to write our own sermons occasionally. A guest pastor would come in once a month to give us the sacraments.

I was married and have two children. My son and his spouse live here in Calgary. My daughter and her spouse live in Karlsruhe, Germany. I have four grandchildren.



After the first quarter of 2023 Highwood is tracking slightly below budgeted income. We are carefully assessing the need for a minimum user group "fee" versus just a "free will offering".

Trustees have started a new project to improve the storage for rental groups using the church building. The cross planter will be converted to lawn this spring to reduce maintenance and watering requirements. The existing special native grass will remain to retain a 'cross' look. The old church office computer was finally replaced in April. Trustees are investigating a parking issue in the back parking lot on Sunday mornings.

Elders are planning a special Sunday School closing event for end of May or early June. There are no confirmands this year at Pentecost, but there should be at least two next year. Elders are also working on updating the member directory list, and updating the Christian Service groups booklet.

TREASURER'S REPORT



3 months ended Mar. 31, 2023

Financial Summary

March current offerings were \$11,016 and church rental receipts were \$2,942. Synod benevolence receipts were \$245 and non-budget benevolence receipts consisted of \$50 for the Calgary Foodbank and \$230 for CLWR. Total March 2023 offerings and church rentals of \$13,958 was \$2,510 greater than last year.

March expenses of \$15,467 were \$996 over budget mainly because of higher repairs and maintenance. \$688 was spent on fixing the Highwood sign and \$194 on roof repairs.

Highwood had a shortfall of \$1,509 for March 2023 compared to a shortfall of \$3,350 last year. Year to date, Highwood has a shortfall of \$5,003 compared to a shortfall of \$8,334 last year. Church receipts for 2023 are \$5,148 higher than last year (\$2,718 higher on Offerings or 8.5% higher and \$2,430 higher on church rentals) but church expenses are \$1,817 higher than last year.

Capital fund – \$65 was donated to the Highwood Lutheran Women's account and \$140 to the Building Fund. The balance in the capital account at the end of March was \$45,987.

Memorial fund – No changes. The balance at the end of March was \$10,375.

THE LAST PAGE

Bishop's Message for May

The message can be found online by clicking [here](#)



NATIONALITIES IN JERUSALEM AT PENTECOST

"Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each." Acts 2:5,6

There were fifteen nations mentioned in Acts 2, but there may have been more than that present. Have you ever wondered when this lesson is read on Pentecost Sunday just where were some of these places located?

Parthians, Medes, Elamites

These people lived in what is now modern Iran. Parthia was located in the northeast, Media was located in the northwest, and Elam in the south just north of the Persian Gulf.

Mesopotamia

At the time of Acts Mesopotamia included modern day Iraq, Kuwait, and western Syria around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Mesopotamia was a Roman province.

Judea

Judea included present day Israel and Palestine, which was also a Roman province at that time.

Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia

These places were all located in what is now modern-day Turkey. Cappadocia was located in eastern central Turkey, Pontus in the northeast on the Black Sea, Asia in the west on the Mediterranean Sea, Phrygia in western central Turkey, and Pamphylia on the southern central coast. They were all Roman provinces.

Cyrene

The city of Cyrene was located near present day Shahat in Libya.

Cretans

There were faithful Jewish men living on the island of Crete, in the Mediterranean Sea, now part of Greece.

Egypt and Rome

There were faithful Jewish men living in Egypt and the city of Rome, at that time capital of the Roman Empire and today capital of Italy.

To see a map of these locations click [here](#).

In most countries in the world Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May. Note that it is singular and not Mothers' Day. When the day was declared early in the 20th Century it was intended for individual families to remember and honour their mother.

MOTHERS

"The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness." Honore de Balzac

"A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie." Tenneva Jordan

"I think in a lot of ways unconditional love is a myth. My mom's the only reason I know it's a real thing." Conor Oberst

"A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary." Dorothy Canfield Fisher

"To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." Dr. Seuss

"A mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no law, no pity, it dates all things and crushes down remorselessly all that stands in its path." Agatha Christie

"A mom is like a teabag. You can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water." Eleanor Roosevelt

"When your mother asks, 'Do you want a piece of advice?' It is a mere formality. It doesn't matter if you answer yes or no. You're going to get it anyway." Erma Bombeck

"Life doesn't come with a manual. It comes with a mother." Unknown

Taken from Good Housekeeping

Join Us

The Day of Pentecost

Sunday, May 28, 2023 at 10:30 AM

We encourage you to wear red

