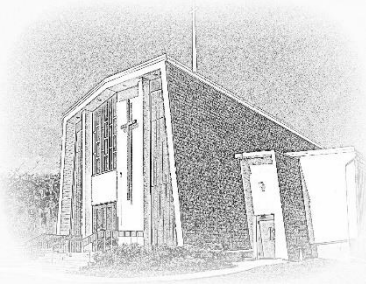


HIGHWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

September 2023

The Newsletter of Highwood Lutheran Church



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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

"The first thing I ask is that people should not make use of my name and should not call themselves Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone. How did I, the poor stinking bag of maggots that I am, come to the point where people call the children of Christ by my evil name?"

- Martin Luther

I have discussed Luther's "sack of maggots" description of humanity several times this previous month. Luther offered this vivid and provocative analogy to describe our sinful nature. This might sound harsh or extreme to modern ears. Current cultural messages which have politically correct emphasis saying you are great just the way you are, stand in stark opposition to this imagery. The challenge is presented to understand what Luther is talking about within his time's historical and theological context. Luther's writings were deeply rooted in his understanding of Scripture and his theological convictions, and his goal was to call attention to what he perceived as the profound spiritual predicament of humanity and the necessity of turning to God's grace for salvation.

The metaphor is found in Luther's writings and sermons, particularly as he discusses his theology of justification. Luther's expressions of Christian doctrine are based heavily on his training as an Augustinian priest. In the context of the black death and constant wars, one can quickly understand why Luther perceived that humans are inherently sinful and incapable of achieving righteousness on their own. Such a striking metaphor was intended to shock a jaded audience into recognising their sinful condition's severity and highlight the need for divine grace. As I look at the news feeds and the current state of the world, sometimes I think that such a description of humanity, with its sinful nature that permeates every aspect of human existence, leaving humanity in a state of moral decay and separation from God, may continue be a more accurate description of our current state, than the empty messages that say everything and everybody is just fine.

This metaphor serves multiple purposes in Luther's theological framework:

1. **Total Depravity:** Luther's metaphor underscores the concept of our total depravity, a belief that humanity is entirely corrupted by sin after the Fall. In his view, sin has permeated every aspect of human nature, leaving no part of the individual untouched by its effects. This intense image graphically illustrates the depth and extent of human sinfulness.

2. **Human Inability:** By using such a graphic image, Luther emphasises that we humans are helpless to overcome the rot of sin and therefore we cannot achieve righteousness on our own. Just as a sack cannot remove the maggots within itself, humans cannot cleanse themselves of sin through their efforts or good works.

3. **Dependence on God's Grace:** Luther's metaphor highlights the necessity of God's grace for salvation. He believed that salvation is a gift from God, obtained through faith in Jesus Christ rather than through human merit. By acknowledging their sinful nature and recognising their inability to save themselves, individuals are encouraged to turn to God in humble dependence on His grace and mercy.

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4. Contrasting Human Righteousness and God's Righteousness: This image contrasts human righteousness, which is flawed and insufficient, with God's divine righteousness. Luther taught that only God's righteousness, imputed to believers through faith, could save them from sin and grant them eternal life.

It's essential to approach Luther's metaphor within the context of his historical and theological setting. While the analogy of a "sack of maggots" might be unsettling, it was intended to emphasise the depth of human sinfulness and the need for divine redemption.

Because it is such a powerful image, Luther's metaphor continues to be a subject of study and discussion among theologians and historians, offering insights into his views on sin, grace, and the human condition. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the metaphor's intensity, it remains a testament to Luther's passion for his flock, and commitment to understand and explain the core issues of faith.

In faith and hope, then, we end with another Luther quote:



God created the world out of nothing, and so long as we are nothing, He can make something out of us. *Martin Luther*

Peace be with you all.

See you on Sunday.

Pastor Mike

Bishop's Message for September

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



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Walter Anderson Sr.
Joan Davis
Mason Giacomini
Emil Sribney
Andres Torres-Ceron
Owen Woycenko

ON THE WEB

BEYOND OUR WEBSITE

Beyond our website, we have pages at Travel Alberta TripAdvisor and the City of Calgary. Have a look:

<https://www.travelalberta.com/listings/highwood-lutheran-church-15978/>

https://www.tripadvisor.ca/Attraction_Review-g154913-d23614188-Reviews-Highwood_Lutheran_Church_Calgary-Calgary_Alberta.html

<https://www.visitcalgary.com/things-to-do/arts-culture/highwood-lutheran-church>

ANOTHER PERFORMANCE OF A ONE MAN BAND



Sam Vander Woude, son of our Music Director and Organist Rick, has made another YouTube video. He is performing Brook Green Suite -Gustav Holst, playing four different instruments. You can view this video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAASTCt6cU8>

Church Financial Report

7 months ended July 31, 2023

Financial Summary

July current offerings were \$13,048 and church rental receipts were \$3,460. Synod benevolence receipts were \$240 and non-budget benevolence receipts consisted of \$245 for CLWR. Total July 2023 offerings and church rentals of \$16,508 were \$1,602 more than last year.

July expenses of \$13,705 were \$766 under budget.

Highwood had a surplus of \$2,803 for July 2023 compared to a surplus of \$819 last year. Year to date, Highwood has a shortfall of \$3,211 compared to a shortfall of \$13,344 last year. Church receipts for 2023 are \$9,412 higher than last year (\$2,174 higher on offerings and \$7,237 higher on church rentals) and church expenses are \$721 lower than last year.

Capital Fund – \$180 was donated to the Building Fund and \$250 to the HLW. The balance in the capital account at the end of July was \$46,786.

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

Albert Einstein: What I particularly admire in him [Pablo Casals] is the firm stand he has taken, not only against the oppressors of his countrymen but also against those opportunists who are always ready to compromise with the Devil. He perceives very clearly that the world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it.

OUR HIGHWOOD FAMILIES

Meet Jarrod, Jennifer, and Ava Hanson



Jarrold and Jennifer were born and raised in Calgary. Jennifer was baptized at Immaculate Conception Church at the former CFB (Canadian Forces Base) Calgary - Currie Barracks, and Jarrold was baptized at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Jarrold and Jennifer met at age 12 while attending middle school in Chestermere, though their lives took separate paths after High School before meeting again.

Jarrold attended SAIT's aircraft maintenance technology program to become an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, working on business jets and smaller aircraft in Red Deer and Calgary, with occasional remote work in Latin America and Europe. Jennifer attended University in various cities throughout Canada - Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS, where she obtained a Bachelor's degree, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, SK, where she obtained a Master's degree in Philosophy, and McMaster University in Hamilton, ON, where she obtained a PhD in Cognitive Science (Psychology, Neuroscience and Philosophy).

Social media served a great purpose in reuniting Jarrold and Jennifer in 2013, and soon after a relationship formed. They married in July 2017, and their daughter, Ava, was born in May 2018.

The family was in search of a Church where they could gain a sense of community when they found Highwood Lutheran.

Ava is a budding intellectual with a love for animals, aspiring to be a veterinarian. She has a lot of opportunities to practice animal care, being in the company of 2 cats and 3 dogs at home. She is currently attending Bears paw Christian School, where her parents see value in a faith-based approach to learning.

Jarrold is currently working as a maintenance team lead with an aircraft management company at the international airport. In addition to being a church trustee, he also serves with the Canadian Forces as a cadet instructor and pilot at a gliding field in Olds. Jennifer currently works as a Clinical Counsellor / Psychotherapist at her private practice in the Northwest. She specializes in working with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and various mental health concerns. Although her client base

consists of members of the general public, she primarily focuses on assisting First Responders - including Veterans, members of the Calgary Police Service, EMS, and Correctional Workers. This work is close to her heart as her father served in the Canadian Forces where he was deployed multiple times to various areas, including Bosnia and Afghanistan.

The family appreciates how the church has shaped and strengthened their faith, and how the warmth of Highwood's congregation supports their faith in Christ.

LUTHERAN WORSHIP

Lutheran worship is characterised by a structured and ordered pattern of worship centred around the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Lord's Supper (also known as the Eucharist or Holy Communion). If you're like me, you love a good liturgy that is done well and cringe at an inappropriate one that is poorly done.

For more than 5,000 years, humans have been doing some ritual when approaching God. Over these eras, the divine liturgy of the church has been remarkably consistent. Fad practices and changes have come and gone while the historical structure of worship, as described by St. John of Chrysostom, which also traces its roots back deep into our Jewish roots, continues. The tenacity of these structures is evidenced in the recovery of lost parts of the service being reintroduced during the reformation. History repeats itself today as so-called contemporary worship services revert to traditional forms and structures as the people recover features of the service that had been removed. Something is holy; in the order, the rhythm, the flow of the words, the music, and the gestures, that makes worship more meaningful and engaging.

As the people's work, Liturgy is more than just a set of rules or rituals we follow mindlessly. There is a language and structure, making it a way of expressing our faith and our relationship with God and each other. Liturgy is a gift God gives us to help us in good order to successfully worship him in spirit and truth. Such worship structures the dialogue between God and his people, as he speaks to us through his Word and Sacraments. It also guides us as we respond with praise, prayer, confession, and thanksgiving.

Understanding Lutheran liturgy starts with remembering that it is rooted in ancient Christian tradition. Lutherans know that the liturgy should be faithful to the Scriptures, centred on Christ, and accessible to the people. Lutherans also value the diversity and freedom of the liturgy so long as it does not contradict the Gospel or the Confessions. Because of its ancient roots, Lutherans have a rich heritage of liturgical resources, which inspire centuries of hymns, prayers, and canticles, as well as direct lectionaries as tools that can enrich our worship and deepen our faith. These works of the people give a structure that safely connects us with God and His grace, reminding us of who God is and what he has

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done for us in Christ. It shapes us into his image and his people. It unites us with the universal church across time and space, empowering us to live as His witnesses.

I write this as an introduction to a series of teaching moments to be interspersed throughout the year as teaching elements in the service. The goal is to review how come we do a particular part of the worship service, and by extension, to raise our awareness as we attend. In that awareness, may we do more than go through the motions. These reminders will help us pay attention to the words and actions of the liturgy as we listen to what God is saying and respond with our whole being to appreciate the beauty and joy of worshipping God with our fellow Lutherans.

Pastor Mike



God has made us stewards of the talents and possessions which He has entrusted to us. All that we are and all that we have belongs to God. We speak of our money and our property, but the real owner is God. Our ownership is subject to the higher ownership of God. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. 10:26). God does not need to beg. The silver and the gold are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills (Haggai 2:8; Ps. 50:10). We may have a clear title to what we call ours, so far as our fellowmen are concerned. But we must acknowledge the prior right of God. In the last analysis, we are not owners at all, but stewards set to administer what God has entrusted to us so long as it pleases Him to leave us in charge. We must give account to Him of how we have administered that which is His. We are not only to be honest in earnings, but we are also to obey God in spending. God expects that a part of what He gives us shall be used to help others and to promote the work of His kingdom. To own is to owe. But many have failed to realize the importance of liberal giving. They show the worst side of their nature when approached for money. "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). God has promised a special blessing for the liberal giver (Luke 6:38; Mal. 3:7-10).

Giving should be according to one's means, as God has prospered one (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Those who have received much should give much, those who have received less should give less. The widow's mite is great in the sight of God when it is all one can give (See Mark 12:41-44). In the Old Testament time God required one-tenth. The New Testament rule for each one is: "as he may prosper" (1 Cor. 16:2).

We are not only stewards of such money and material possessions as we may have, but also of the abilities and opportunities which God gives us. The ability to sing, teach, speak, administer the business affairs of the congregation, and the like, are all talents to be used in the service of God and His church. We must not hide our talents "in a napkin of sloth and idleness." Whatever talent God may have given us, should be yielded back to Him for service.

Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do,"
While the souls of men are dying
and the Master calls for you.

Take the task He gives you gladly,
Let His work your pleasure be,
Answer quickly when He calls you,
"Here am I. Send me, send me."

Editor's Note: This article was taken from a publication of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1924 by Augsburg Publishing. The message has not changed in 99 years.

SOME QUOTES TO INSPIRE YOU

"He said "Love...as I have loved you." We cannot love too much."—*Amy Carmichael*.

"What you are is God's gift to you, what you become is your gift to God."—*Hans urs von Balthasar*.

"Joy is the infallible proof of the presence of God."—*Madeleine L'engle*

"Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them."—*Elisabeth Elliot*.

"For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God."—*Saint Teresa of Ávila*.

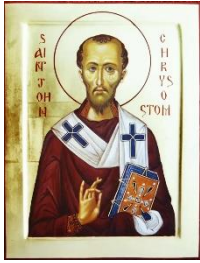
"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."—*C. S. Lewis*.

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe."—*Saint Augustine*

"God will meet you where you are in order to take you where He wants you to go."—*Tony Evans*

"However many blessings we expect from God, His infinite liberality will always exceed all our wishes and our thoughts."—*John Calvin*

From Readers' Digest



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (died 14 September 407*) is characterised by its theological depth, scriptural richness, and emphasis on the mystery of the Eucharist. It reflects the early understanding

of worship as participating with the heavenly realm, where the faithful join the angels to praise God. While the core structure of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom remains consistent, there can be variations in hymns, prayers, and specific practices based on regional customs and other liturgical traditions. Indeed, certain theological and liturgical principles operative from Chrysostom's writings influence Lutheran liturgy and can be attributed to broader developments in early Christian worship practices and theological thought.

Both Chrysostom and the Lutheran tradition strongly emphasise the importance of the Word of God and the Sacraments (especially Baptism and the Eucharist) in the life of the Church. Chrysostom's focus on the "Liturgy of the Word" and his exhortations to hear and understand the Scriptures influenced the Lutheran liturgical emphasis on reading and preaching the Word of God in the worship service.

We see further influence in Chrysostom's homiletical and exegetical approach to the Scriptures. His approach laid the foundation for a more profound engagement with Scripture within the worship context. With its commitment to Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone), Lutheranism naturally drew from this emphasis on the Scriptures as a guiding principle for liturgical practices and hymnody.

Chrysostom's teachings on the Eucharist, particularly his emphasis on the blessing of the elements as the body and blood of Christ, echo themes found in Lutheran Eucharistic theology and the Lutheran understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist parallels Chrysostom's theological reflections.

Luther placed a strong emphasis on the role of liturgy to teach the faithful. Chrysostom's pastoral concern for instructing and edifying the congregation through clear and practical preaching is evident in the Lutheran understanding of liturgy as a means of catechesis (teaching) and spiritual formation. Lutheran liturgy often incorporates hymns, prayers, and readings that educate and nurture the faith of the worshippers. Also, Chrysostom's moral and ethical exhortations within his sermons resonate with the Lutheran tradition's emphasis on the connection between faith and good works. While Lutheran theology strongly emphasises justification by faith alone, there is also a recognition of the role of good works as a response to God's grace.

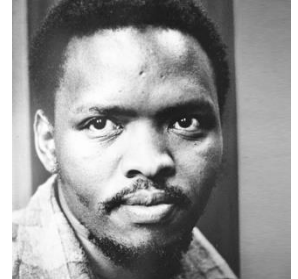
While the direct influence of Chrysostom's writings, his theological insights and the broader currents of early Christian worship undoubtedly contributed to the development of liturgical practices in various branches of Christianity, including Lutheranism. The general emphasis on the Word of God, Sacraments, Eucharistic theology, instruction, and ethical living that can be found in both

Chrysostom's teachings and Lutheran theology reflects a shared heritage within the broader Christian tradition.

* Since 1970, because the feast of the [Exaltation of the Holy Cross](#) falls on 14 September, the [General Roman Calendar](#) celebrates him on the 13th

STEVEN BIKO, ACTIVIST

Stephen Biko (**Bantu Stephen Biko**) was a prominent anti-apartheid activist and leader in South Africa who significantly challenged the oppressive apartheid regime. He co-founded the Black



Consciousness Movement, which aimed to empower black South Africans mentally and politically by promoting self-awareness, pride in black identity, and resistance against racial discrimination.

Biko's activism and criticism of apartheid policies drew the attention of the South African government, making him a target of harassment and surveillance. On 18 August 1977, he was arrested by the South African police and taken into custody. During his time in custody, he was brutally beaten and tortured, leading to his death on 12 September 1977. The news of Biko's death spread quickly within South Africa and internationally, sparking outrage and condemnation. The global response to his death was a significant political event as it prompted protests and demonstrations in various countries worldwide in demand for justice for his death and an end to apartheid. The news of his death further galvanised the international anti-apartheid movement. With extensive media coverage globally, his death put a spotlight on the brutal and inhumane practices of the apartheid regime and the broader human rights abuses occurring in South Africa. Further, his death added momentum to the global call for sanctions against South Africa. Many countries, institutions, and corporations started implementing economic and cultural boycotts, which increasingly isolated South Africa diplomatically and economically.

Biko's life and death inspired numerous songs, poems, books, and artworks. Artists like Peter Gabriel dedicated songs to him; his story was featured in literature and the 1987 film *Cry Freedom*. This publicity encouraged solidarity movements worldwide, calling for the release of political prisoners and dismantling apartheid. People of all backgrounds joined these movements to stand with the oppressed people of South Africa as his ideas and principles continue to inspire anti-apartheid activists, leaders, and campaigns globally. His name is a testament to the continuing struggle for justice and human rights.

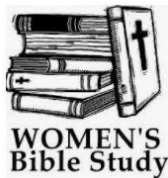
Photo By Unknown photographer - <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/stephen-bantu-biko> South African History Online, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63088528>

HIGHWOOD'S MINISTRIES



Highwood's choir will begin again on Sunday, September 10th at 9:30 AM. We only practice on Sunday mornings and sing a variety of music for our services. All are welcome to join. If you have any questions, please talk to Rick Vander Woude or any other choir member.

HLW WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



Please mark your calendar for the first Bible Study meeting starting on September 12th. We meet downstairs, so please come to the back door. We start at 1:30 PM (greetings with prayer, Bible Study, Coffee or tea and small snack with social time). Sometime, a short business meeting, if needed. If you need a ride, please call me, Clarice, or Helga. Also, bring a friend if you would like. Everyone is welcome and we all learn from each other.

Pat Fedkenheuer



Registration Day for Sunday School classes is September 17th.

Kick-Off is 24 September at 10:30 AM with an emphasis on youth participation in the Service.

Spread the news to your family, friends, and neighbours. All are welcome to join us.

AUTUMN SECURITY REMINDER

All key holders of the church: For the safety and security of all, before you leave, walk through the basement and the upstairs checking that all lights are off and all doors, including the elevator, are locked.

We appreciate your diligence and care for others and our church.

HOT SHOTS



We are starting a new year of showing movies that make you think!

After viewing the film, we will enjoy a delicious lunch with time for discussion. There is a free will collection to offset the cost of food. Join us every third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM.

Our first film on 19 September and the title is a surprise.



KNITTING CIRCLE

After a restful summer, it's time to pick up your needles and let the knitting and crocheting begin. Anyone interested in learning how to knit, or crochet are encouraged to join us, and we'll teach you. We will be creating hats, mitts, scarves, and more for the needy people of Calgary. Our Prayer shawls are gifted to the residents of Bethany Care Centres. You are also most welcome to join us for fellowship (needles are not required). Our first meeting will be on the 28th of September at 10:00 AM in the conference room in the church basement. See you soon.