

HIGHWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

July-August 2024

The Newsletter of Highwood Lutheran Church



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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

FACING AUTHRITARIANISM

The aphorism "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." is echoed by Spanish philosopher George Santayana, who wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In contrast, British statesman Winston Churchill wrote, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

The recent remembrances of the Normandy Invasion on D-Day contextualise our need to remember the past as we face the challenges of our present time. Democracy's retreat and the rise of authoritarian leaders with nationalistic fervour echo chilling consequences. With the call to denazify Ukraine, we are explicitly called to see parallels to the 20th century's fascist regimes, as economic anxieties and political polarisation fuel a dangerous trend. Globally, leaders with autocratic zeal are consolidating power, eroding civil liberties, and stoking nationalistic fervour. Indeed, the chilling similarities between these periods, as presented in economic anxieties, political polarisation, and the manipulation of national identity, make people lean toward authoritarian rule. Indeed, the current trends bear an unsettling resemblance to the historical rise of fascist regimes, particularly the Nazi Party's ascent to power in Germany, which culminated in the devastating catastrophe of World War II.

By 1934, Nazi Germany presented an ideology that was rampant across Europe as its grip tightened on the Protestant churches. Today's instrumentalization of faith for political ends mirrors the tactics of the "German Christians." The faction and movement called *German Christians* (Deutsche Christen) operated within the German Evangelical Church from 1932 to 1945. They aligned with the antisemitic, racist, and Führerprinzip ideologies of Nazism, aiming to steer German Protestantism toward these principles by blurring the lines between church and state and weaponizing religion for nationalist goals. Their primary tactics involved elevating race and the Führer to positions of divine authority. Parallels are particularly stark in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The Russian Orthodox Church, under Patriarch Kirill, has positioned itself as a staunch supporter of the war, justifying it in religious terms.

A resistance movement called the Confessing Church emerged in 1934 in response to the German Christians. Their cornerstone document was the Barmen Declaration. The Declaration was written mainly by the Reformed theologian Karl Barth before it underwent modification, especially with the introduction of its fifth article (on the two kingdoms), as a result of input from several Lutheran theologians, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This Declaration was a resounding "No" to any authority that rivals God. It proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the sole Lord and the unshakeable foundation for the church's message and mission. Barman's theology expresses direct opposition to authoritarian and nazi ideology, which demanded absolute obedience to the state and its leader. Barman also emphasises the church's autonomy, rejecting state control and interference in its affairs.

Continued Page 2

Continued from Page 1

It is disturbing how closely the precepts they present resonate deeply in today's world, where we witness a rise in authoritarian regimes wielding increasing power over all aspects of society. The message of the Barmen Declaration may offer a framework for religious institutions to navigate the current complexities of authoritarianism. Barman's articles remind us that faith should not be a tool for political agendas. Churches, mosques, synagogues, and other houses of worship have a sacred duty to speak truth to power, advocate for peace and justice, and defend the vulnerable.

While such sentiments are easy to express, the reality of action is far more nuanced. History and the present day provide chilling examples of religious institutions collaborating with authoritarian regimes. In some cases, religious leaders may genuinely believe that aligning with the state serves their religion's interests or fosters a semblance of stability. The story of the Confessing Church itself reveals the spectrum of responses. While some theologians like Barth and Bonhoeffer became prominent voices of resistance, others within the Protestant churches remained silent or even actively supported the Nazis. We strive to not judge individuals in their choices as the context in which they operated was extraordinarily complex and nuanced. Indeed, the variety of responses to authoritarian pressure highlights religious leaders' internal struggles and difficult choices within authoritarian contexts.

Applying Barman's principles requires courage and discernment. In a world of disinformation, curating credible information sources becomes profoundly complicated. Identifying the role of religious institutions within current situations is undoubtedly challenging. The Barmen Declaration can only provide a starting point with its call for theological clarity and unwavering commitment to God's authority. If nothing else, our current context allows us to reclaim the prophetic voice, taking guidance from documents like The Barmen Declaration as a potent reminder that true faith demands resistance against idolatry, be it of the state, race, or ideology. With God's grace, we can be beacons of hope and resistance considering modern authoritarianism by grounding ourselves in core values, speaking truth to power, and standing with the oppressed.

Pastor Mike

ON THE WEB BEYOND OUR WEBSITE

Here are some links that may be of interest to you:

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/wars-and-conflicts/second-world-war/day-and-the-battle-of-normandy>

<https://creedsandconfessions.org/barmen-declaration.html>

<http://matthewlbecker.blogspot.com/2012/10/pericope-of-week-theological.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barmen_Declaration

Lutheran World Federation leaders met with Pope Francis:

<https://lutheranworld.org/news/new-lwf-leaders-meet-pope-francis>

Florence Nightengale

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Florence-Nightingale>

<https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/florence-nightingale-1>



5 Months Ended May 31, 2024

Financial Summary

May current offerings were \$9,744 and church rental receipts were \$2,865. Synod benevolence receipts were \$165 and non-budget benevolence receipts consisted of \$50 for the Calgary Foodbank and \$100 for CLWR and \$100 for Lutheran Hospital Ministry. Total May 2024 offerings and church rentals of \$12,609 were \$741 more than May/23.

May expenses of \$17,229 were \$2,225 over budget because of high repairs and maintenance of \$1,950 (kitchen drainage repairs) and higher utilities.

Highwood had a shortfall of \$4,620 for May 2024 compared to a shortfall of \$2,235 last year. Year to date, Highwood has a shortfall of \$10,111 compared to a shortfall of \$6,094 last year. Church receipts for 2024 are \$1,687 higher than last year (\$1,632 lower on Offerings but \$3,319 higher on church rentals) but church expenses are \$5,703 higher than last year (up 7.5%) relating mainly to higher repairs and maintenance, Synod convention fees, Synod study conference and compensation costs. Of note, I talked to a different Telus rep who gave us a renewed Telus Fiber internet account for the same three-year promotional discount rate of \$100/month (vs regular rate of \$160/month) that we had received previously.

Capital fund – \$80 was donated to the Building Fund. The balance in the accumulated operating surplus account at the end of May was \$25,888.

Memorial Fund – \$50 was donated during the month. The balance at the end of May was \$11,425.

OUR HIGHWOOD FAMILY

My Journey to Highwood Lutheran Church

Walter Anderson



Upon our arrival in Canada in 2001 as landed immigrants and permanent residents in the Province of Prince Edward Island, we encountered a vastly different environment from what we were accustomed to, particularly in terms of technological advancements. We swiftly became part of the United Church, where our children engaged in Sunday school activities, and our daughter later joined the Girl Guides. As we integrated into our faith community and neighborhood, we were fortunate to meet supportive individuals who enriched our new life in this country.

Three months later, we relocated to the neighboring Province of Nova Scotia, where I pursued my studies in the field of education. Upon completing my studies, I was offered a teaching position for the following academic year, which I accepted. I commenced teaching after graduating from the education program and taught for a full school year. Towards the end of the academic year, I applied for a position with the Calgary Board of Education, attended interviews, and subsequently received a job offer, prompting our move to Calgary, Alberta.

Once in Calgary, we initially knew only two families but soon sought out a Lutheran denomination and visited Highwood Lutheran Church. The warm welcome we received made us feel like we belonged. We forged friendships with wonderful people, including the late Twyla Beamer and Pastor Steve whose frequent visits played a significant role in our decision to become active members of the congregation.

Our children found comfort in the church community, eagerly participating in Sunday school classes and taking on various roles such as readers and Acolytes during Sunday services. Thanks.

STAMPEDE LUNCH



Sunday July 14th – the last day of Stampede we will be having a Stampede lunch of pancakes and sausages right after Service.

All are welcome. Sign up sheet is downstairs on the bulletin board. YAHOO!!!

Happy Birthday

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Walterbeth Anderson
Nelsy Ferrersosa-
Salcedo
Laura Mutschlechner
Ruby Panser
Jerry Rasmuson
Monica Rasmuson
Linda Schnell

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Liesel Fedkenheuer
Blade Ford
Shannone Friesen
Al Gummo
Jenny Laboret
Brett Patychuck
Amber Rasmuson
Clarice Rasmuson
Emma Tang
Christian Tang

O THOU WHO CHANGEST NOT

Henry Francis Lyte was a 19th century Anglican priest. He suffered from bad health his whole life and when he was 54 he developed tuberculosis which brought him near the end of his life. As his days were nearing the end, he preached one last time to his people and that evening placed in the hands of a relative the little hymn, "Abide With Me". Weeks later Mr. Lyte went to be with Christ. One of the lines of this great hymn reads, "Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

As he came closer and closer to the end one reality deeply impressed itself upon him: the changing, decaying nature of the world, and one thought brought him comfort: the unchangeable nature of God. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Everything is changing in this world. Houses are built up around once secluded lakes and woods. The seasons change. Young boys playing baseball and running around the bases like stallions turn into older men playing cards and making the risky trek down the driveway to the mailbox. Robert Frost wrote, "Nature's first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold; Her early leaf's a flower; But only so an hour. Then leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief, So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay."

In a world like this, where can we find any stability? Where can we find any place for our souls to lean on in full, sweet, peace and rest? Is there any hope? Yes! Yes! Above this changing world is the unchanging God. He never changes, never decays, and never fails. His love never changes, his promises never change, and his kingdom knows no end. He is the great "I AM" from which everything came, by which everything is sustained and to whose glory everything is aimed. He is the Mighty Rock, the great, unchanging foundation of all existence and all reality. Psalm 46:1-2 says, "God is our refuge and strength...Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea..."

Peter Banfe,

COUNCIL NEWS



Highwood Building Fund Special Projects

Our aging pipe organ needs some major repairs.

Our outside street sign needs to be replaced.

Both projects require significant funding.

A Fund-raising Committee has been formed led by Jerry Rasmuson. This special project funding will remain outside of our current budget cycle. Both projects are supported by Council.

Stay tuned for more info over the summer.

ELCIC SYNOD CONVENTION NEWS



At the Synod of Alberta and the Territories convention held in Edmonton, June 22nd to 24th, Rev. Trish Schermund, pastor of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Edmonton, was elected Bishop on the fifth ballot. She replaces Rev. Larry Kochendorfer.

Eastern Synod Convention

At the Eastern Synod Convention, held June 20 to 22 in Mississauga, Ontario, delegates elected Rev. Carla Blakley as Synod Bishop on the fifth ballot.

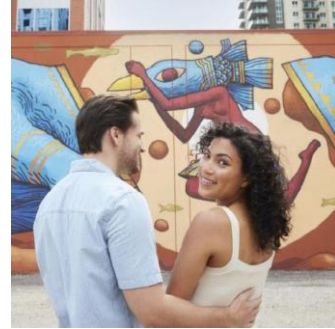
Saskatchewan Synod Convention

At the Saskatchewan Synod Convention in Saskatoon, SK, held May 30 to June 1, delegates elected Rev. Dr. Ali Tote to serve as Synod Bishop. He was elected on the second ballot.

MNO Synod Convention

At the MNO Synod Convention, held May 24 to 26 in Selkirk, Manitoba, delegates re-elected Rev. Jason Zinko as Synod Bishop on the first ballot.

Calgary Public Art Trail Digital Pass



Tourism Calgary has partnered with Beltline Urban Mural Project (BUMP), Calgary Arts Development, and the City of Calgary to create a new digital pass experience that highlights public art & artists in Calgary.

Running until May 31, 2025, the Calgary Public Art Trail pass is a free, gamified check-in challenge that encourages city-wide exploration, and supports art initiatives in our city.

Citizens and visitors alike are able to participate in the challenge. Visit the [Calgary Public Art Trail](#) webpage for more details!

Florence Nightingale



(born May 12, 1820, [Florence](#) [Italy]—died August 13, 1910, London, England) was a British nurse, statistician, and social reformer who was the foundational philosopher of modern [nursing](#). Nightingale was put in charge of nursing British and allied soldiers in Turkey during the [Crimean War](#). She spent many hours in the wards, and her night rounds giving personal care to the wounded established her image as the “Lady with the Lamp.” Her efforts to formalise nursing [education](#) led her to establish the first scientifically based nursing school—the Nightingale School of Nursing, at [St. Thomas’ Hospital](#) in [London](#) (opened 1860). She also was instrumental in setting up training for midwives and nurses in [workhouse](#) infirmaries. She was the first woman awarded the [Order of Merit](#) (1907). [International Nurses Day](#), observed annually on May 12, [commemorates](#) her birth and celebrates the important role of nurses in health care.