

PASTORS PERSPECTIVE

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

In today’s ever increasing polarization I find this passage growing in significance for how we approach discussions on various controversial and sensitive topics. It came to mind for me most recently regarding the “Chick-Fil-A” incident. It was over a month ago that the President of Chick-Fil-A, Mr. Dan Cathy was asked his opinion on marriage for an article that ran in Baptist Press. There he stated his conviction that marriage is between one man and one woman. That is all he said on the topic. He is well known for running the franchise on Biblical principles as evidenced by the fact that they are closed on Sundays.

I found the backlash from his statement a sad commentary on how quickly folks jump to anger and pointed accusatory fingers of prejudice, discrimination, and hate toward the President of this restaurant chain. We have become a society where stating an opinion results in being accused of hate-speech. Let me be clear, stating one’s position Biblically is NOT hate-speech.

Immediately after Mr. Cathy’s statement was made there was a call for a boycott of the franchise by advocates for same-sex marriage or civil unions. What resulted was a national call through social media to support Chick-Fil-A in a public show of support not necessarily for their President’s stance but for his right in this country to state his stance. In the days that followed there was a counter appeal for same-sex couples to stage a kiss-in. That day, the franchise responded by providing free water. Additionally, a server for Chick-Fil-A responded with words of blessing and forgiveness when being on the receiving end of an anger fill tirade. What a wonderful way to respond to those who wish to revile you or utter evil toward you. It is not easy standing up for what we believe and it is certainly difficult to bless those who hate us and get in our face.

While it is important to stand by the Biblical and historic teachings of Christian faith, this especially matters in how we treat others who accuse us of hate.

Indeed, we are all sinners. There is no escape for us. We deserve the punishment of death for our sins. Yet, we hear the Word of God from the Prophet Ezekiel who states, “Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live; (Ezekiel 33:11a.)” God’s desire for us to live is further clarified in John 3:17. “For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

As children of God for whom Christ Jesus suffered and died, it is our calling to live faithfully. Such a call to faithful living is not easy. It is important for us as Christians that we encourage each other in true faith, and teach our youth to stand up for what we believe. The Apostle Paul calls us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) even if we suffer for the faith. We are united with Christ in our baptism. Such unity with Christ is expressed in this way in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." And while we face trials and tribulations we hold to the promise of God that "...neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39).

God bless,
Pastor Mark

Sermon Titles

Sept. 2 – What Is Your Heart Like?

Sept. 9 – Looks Can Be Deceiving

Sept. 16 – What do you say?

Sept. 23 – A Picture of Humility

Octogenarian Birthdays

Mrs. Erma Baker 89 September 5, 1922

Mrs. Dorothy McWilliams 88 September 18, 1923

Please note; Octogenarian Sunday will be held on October 14th this year. On that day, we will honor those who are present for the service, and remember those who were not able to attend in our prayers. If you, or a family member, have achieved the milestone of 80 great years, please inform the church if you would like to be included for recognition.

Big Thanks

Glenn and Lynn Ann Tarris wish to extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone for keeping Lynn Ann in your prayers as she underwent Lymphodema Micro surgery in Charleston, S.C. Lynn Ann continues to improve with a 50% reduction in the size of her arm as a result of the surgery. She will continue to receive physical therapy at the Excelsa Health/Arnold Palmer Pavilion over the next few weeks followed by nightly compression wraps.

Thank you to all of our volunteer singers for the month of August. You did a wonderful job and your songs were truly appreciated.

Attention Married Couples

Time is running out to sign up for your Fall Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend. Don't miss your opportunity to experience the enrichment this program provides for ALL MARRIAGES. The October 19 - 21 weekend in White Haven is full. However, we'd be happy to add you to the waiting list if you contact us at the numbers below.

There is still room at the Sept. 14 – 16 session at the beautiful Olmsted Mansion and Retreat Center located in the Allegheny National Forest, 20 miles southeast of Warren, PA.

The registration fee is \$45 per couple. Toward the end of the weekend you will be given an opportunity to make a confidential contribution of whatever amount you wish toward the continuation of the program. Included are 2 nights lodging, 5 meals for each person, and all supplies.

To register for the Sept. weekend, go to the website: www.GodLovesMarriage.org and sign up using your credit card. For questions, or to have a registration brochure mailed to you, contact Pennsylvania Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, 724.325.3166. Or email them at: fjschamber@comcast.net.

Take Joy!

On Monday, Sept. 17th, at 2:30 pm, the group will hold a worship service at Loyalhanna.

In September, the group will gather at 10:30 am, in the Friendship Room at the St. Paul Church, for fellowship and to share with each other our joy in God's gracious gifts to us.

In October, we plan to visit the "Flight 93 Memorial," followed by lunch at The Ligonier Country Inn. Details are forthcoming.

On Sunday, December 9th, we are planning to attend a matinee Christmas Holiday performance offered by the Ligonier Valley Players. Because seating is limited, we will need to confirm your intent to reserve a ticket within the next few weeks.

The ticket price is \$15.00. For details and ticket info, contact Sandy Freeman.

Reminder!!

Sunday, September 2nd, is the last day for the outdoor 8:30 am service.

Worship and Music

On Thursday, Sept. 20th, the Worship and Music Committee will have a meeting at 7 pm.

Sunday School Teacher Meeting

There will be a meeting held on Wednesday, Sept. 5th, at 7:00 pm, for all Sunday school teachers. It will be held in the general meeting room at St. Paul.

Picnic

There will be a Choir Appreciation picnic held on Sept. 12th, at 6 pm, in the pavilion at St. Paul's. Show your support for our dedicated Choir members. Bring a covered dish and join the festivities.

Rally Day

During the service of September 9th, installation of Sunday School teachers will take place. Join them prior to service, at 9:15, in the church basement for a breakfast and distribution of gifts to those returning, and first time, teachers. Sunday School teachers are still needed for the older students. Contact Susan Vikartosky.

Ringin in Fall

The St. Paul Bell Choir will be performing on Saturday, Sept. 8th, at the Stahlstown Flax Scutchin Festival, in Stahlstown, Pa, on route 711. Plan to attend to show your support, or, contact Gaille Hoffer if you would like to join the bell choir. Bell choir practice is held on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.

Singers and Ringers Wanted

As we return from our summer vacation relaxed and refreshed, may we also be filled with a new Spirit to serve the Lord. It is my hope that this will be a season to accept new challenges, and any, and all, are welcome to join the Choir on Wednesday night, at 7:30 pm, as we raise a joyful noise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to be present every Sunday to be a choir member.

The Bell Choir, Children's Choir, and Senior Choir, are all worthy efforts to praise the Lord. Try it, you might just find a renewed Spirit of Faith to serve your Church.
Yours in Christ, (the new) Marty

Attention Parents of College Students

Please submit the address of your college student to St. Paul so that they may receive a "care" package from us.

Prayer Chain

To be included in the prayer chain, please submit your email address to receive prayer pages. Or, you can pick them up at the Sunday School office.

Altar Flower sign-up

If you would like to place flowers on the Altar in memory of a loved one, or to celebrate a special milestone, it is a very simple process.

There is an "Altar Flower Chart," that is located on the wall in the Sunday School Office.

1. Select an available date and write ***your name*** on the chart for that date.
2. Complete the form, which is available below the chart, indicating your intention to supply flowers on that date. Fill in ***HOW*** it is to be acknowledged in the church bulletin.
3. Deposit the form in the Offering Plate or outside the Secretary's office.
4. It is then your responsibility to contact the florist of your choice, make your selection, and then make arrangements to have the flowers delivered to St. Paul's the day before the date you selected. Or, deliver them yourself to the church the day prior to the date you selected.
5. Arrangements may also be made through the church office for the secretarial team to order the flowers and then have the bill sent to you.

Baptisms scheduled

On Sunday, Sept. 2nd, the baptism of Elizabeth Ann Ashton, daughter of Janna (Shopsky) and Chris Ashton, will take place. The family currently reside in Fayetteville, N. Carolina, while they complete their military obligations. Please remember Chris Ashton in your prayers as he is currently deployed in Afghanistan.

Give Thanks and Praise

St. Paul's will be the host church for the Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service on November 19th, at 7:30 pm. We would like to have a Community Choir for this Service. If you aren't inclined to join the choir full-time, maybe the Spirit will move you to join us in praise for this special service. Think about it, the Lord may be calling you.

Galatians Bible Study

Pastor Mark will be starting a six-week Bible study on Galatians. We will meet every Thursday evening from 7:00-8:15, starting September 27th and running through November 1st.

Sept. 27 – Gal. 1	Oct. 18 – Gal. 4
Oct. 4 – Gal. 2	Oct. 25 – Gal. 5
Oct. 11 – Gal. 3	Nov. 1 – Gal. 6

There are no Council actions for this newsletter as there was no Council meeting in August.

Caring Ministries

Life comes with many twists and turns, peaks and valleys. With this journey we experience many emotions --- love, anger, happiness, sadness, calm, anxiety, fulfillment and grief. In our library, our Caring Ministries has provided Care Notes, pamphlets, and literature, to offer support during difficult times. Along with Care Notes dealing with grief, you will find information for Advance

Directives, caregivers, support for military families, dealing with divorce, anger and anxiety. Please feel free to take any of the Care Notes on display in the Sunday School office. If you need support or information please see Pastor Mark or Sandy Freeman. We are here to offer our help when you need it.

Communion Prep Groups

September 2 – Bill & Shawna Willochell/ Josephine Linden/ Dick & Nancy Zimmerman/ Ivan & Doris Couchenour

September 23 – Susan Vikartosky/ Terri Russo/ Amy Werner/ Jerry & Erin Howard

Lectors

September 2 – Pat Shopsy

Sept. 9 – Pat Ankney

Sept. 16 – Ron McKlveen

Sept. 23 – Susan Vikartosky

Sept. 30 – Michael Clevenger

Acolytes

Sept. 2 – Wyatt Hull

Sept. 9- Dillon Albright

Sept. 16 – TBA

Sept. 23 – TBA

Sept. 30 – Josh Clevenger

Bell Ringers

To be announced. You may volunteer for any Sunday.

Memorable September Days

Labor Day Weekend

Remember September 11, 2001 with your prayers for our country

