

# Happenings At Hope

September – October  
Volume 2, Number 5

## In This Issue

- 1 - From the Pastor
- 2 - *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*
- 3 - Life Without Life
- 4 - Why Christian Education?
- 5 - Parish News

### *From The Pastor*

Dear members and friends of Hope Lutheran Church. I probably don't have to remind you that we are a rather far-flung congregation, with people driving upwards of an hour just to get to Church on a Sunday. Now in and it itself, this isn't all that strange. Many people who live outside of the "Lutheran Belt" of the upper midwest have longer drives to get to church.

But the thing that makes your longer commute to church (if you have one) strange is the fact that you are driving so far to get to church in Utah. So many of our Mormon friends and neighbors don't have anything even resembling a long drive to attend their services. In fact, in many places, they can see the spire of their ward house from their front yard.

So, is this something to be discouraged by, that we Confessional Lutherans are not only outnumbered in this state but that some of us also have a long way to go to get to Church? Well, that depends on what part of being a member of a church makes you happy. Are you drawn to be a member of a "big" church with a very large national or local



membership simply because of its bigness? Or, do you want to be a member of a church, and church body, which is faithful in its teaching of God's Word and administration of the Sacraments?

Of course this is a leading question, with an obviously right and wrong choice. All of us, whether we live in Provo, Tooele, Bountiful, or even right in West Jordan, are members of this congregation because we want to be faithful to God in our understanding and reception of His Word and the Sacraments. Does this mean that some of us have a longer drive to church than we would if we didn't care so much? Sure it does, but the length of a trip doesn't determine the value of a trip.

If you were to drive any distance to partake of something that wasn't true, then that trip would be worthless—even if it was one that only took a minutes walk. But to be able to receive all the blessings Christ has won for us, as God gives them to us in the Means of Grace, there is no such thing as a drive that is too long.

May God bless you all, both near and far from Hope Lutheran Church.

-Pastor Webber





So far in our study of the different parts of the historic liturgy, we have discussed the significance of the Invocation, Confession & Absolution, the *Introit & Gloria Patri*, and the *Kyrie Eleison*. All of these previous articles can be found in the old issues of *Happenings at Hope*, which are on our church website. This brings us now to the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*.

This is a song which is directly inspired by Scripture. In Luke 2:14, we read that right away after the birth of Christ, a multitude of angels sang out from heaven, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" And in John 1:29 we read what John the Baptist said to his followers when he saw Jesus approaching, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" These two verses serve as the Scripture foundation for this song.

This is one of those songs for which there is no answer to the question of "who sang it first." But we do know that versions of this song have been sung as part of the corporate worship of the Christian Church since the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. And, as it was part of the order of service that was used by the Roman Catholic Church prior to the Reformation, the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* has always been part of the Lutheran Liturgical tradition.

As we look at the content of this song, we can't help but see that it is a song which

not only praises the Triune God, but also confesses what is true regarding what God has done to save us. We read in the opening phrases that we are praising God "for His glory." And, as we know historical context of the section of Scripture from which these words are taken, we remember that the chief way in which God has shown His glory is in the incarnation and birth of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. It is this gift from God which makes it possible for us to worship Him, along with the fact that this Savior whom God sent was, indeed, the sacrificial lamb who took our sins onto Himself in His suffering and death on the cross.

Depending on which order of service we are using on a given Sunday, we don't always sing the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* in the same way. On those Sundays when we are using the "Common Service" (Rite II) this song is longer, while on those Sundays when we are using the Scandinavian "Bugenhagen Order" (Rite I), it is much shorter. The reason for this difference is that the Common Service includes the full-length version of the song, while the Bugenhagen Order includes a shorter paraphrase. But either way, whenever we sing the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* we are praising God for the fact that He not only is merciful to us in seeing to the needs of our everyday lives, but that in particular He has seen to our eternal spiritual needs by the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who has taken our sins onto Himself and has made us to be at peace with God.



# Life Without Life

As a nation and society, we seem to be bouncing day by day between immoral, shocking, untrue and almost-unbelievable news stories. Truth is twisted and mixed with lies and gossip and simmered in a pot of anger and hostility. There seems to be no end to Satan's attacks these days, making not only Christians, but anyone with common sense wonder "what's next?"

If you haven't been watching closely, you may have missed the latest foray into the bizarre labyrinth of modern thinking. Two videos have been published online purporting to show doctors who work for Planned Parenthood bargaining with undercover activists over the cost of human body parts abortion clinics can provide to researchers. Although Planned Parenthood officially says the "tissue" is donated, the videos clearly show that money is involved in the transaction. It appears that various organs from dead babies are being sold. Shocking? Yes.

But, should we be shocked? Doctors who perform abortions regularly tear apart living, unborn babies or kill them in a variety of other ways. Planned Parenthood unabashedly promotes the destruction of human life through abortion. Should we be



shocked, then, that doctors working for them are willing to deal in the body parts of those they have killed? "Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies." (Psalm 7:14 ESV)

This is what abortionists would like us to believe: that life begins at an arbitrary time, decided by mothers, doctors and activists. Prior to that, a "fetus" is only a lump of cells. That arbitrary time could be at three months gestation, or nine months, as long as the "fetus" isn't born, doesn't breathe, etc. But, if a "fetus" is only a lump of cells until it is born, how can these doctors promise intact organs to researchers wishing to purchase them?

The shock to me is not the fact this discussion takes place over lunch, just like a normal business deal. It's not the callous way in which the doctors talk about the remains of a child who has been legally murdered in between bites of salad. Or how money is so clearly offered and accepted for the organs of a child who has been killed by dismemberment. The shock to me is that so few seem to be shocked.

We seem to have arrived at a place in which life no longer matters to many. We are living in a time of life without life—people live but give no thought to the lives of others. Body parts of slaughtered children can be bought and sold without a thought, between the salad and entrée at a restaurant. Jokes can be made about funding an exotic sports car with the revenue. And very few care.

Christians cannot become callous and uncaring in the face of this evil. We must continue to witness to the truth that life comes from God and all lives are precious to Him. We must stand up to the evil that would destroy the most vulnerable among us in the name of convenience or progress. We must help the women who have been caught up in the lies of the abortion industry and who now have to deal with the aftermath of their decisions. We need them to see that there is saving relief for sorrowing guilt through the holy, precious blood of a Savior who was conceived and born for all sinners.

(Continued on Page 5)

As you read this, summer has ended and yet another school year has already begun. Even though many young people wish that they didn't have to go to school (an opinion which they have been known to enunciate from time to time) it is good for them to go, and for their parents to make them go even if the kids don't want to. This is because young people need to learn about what is, and has been, true in the world, so that they can grow up and be not only functioning, but even productive, members of society. It is the responsibility of parents to see to it that their children get an education. Whether they teach them at home, or send them to a public or private school, Parents should be actively involved in the education of their children, making sure that they are taught what they need to know so that when they grow up, they can live fruitful lives.

But we should not think that children are going to learn everything they need to know in school. Yes, things like math, reading, and science are important. But what is most important? It isn't something that kids are going to learn at most every school. The most important thing that a child or someone of any age needs to know is the Gospel of Christ. And not only are children not going to be taught this at school, but so often their Christian faith, and their Biblically shaped way of looking at the world, is going to be directly challenged and attacked at school, by both their fellow students and even their teachers.

This is why parents should be just as (if not more) concerned with their children receiving a quality Christian education. Children need to know that God has forgiven them of their sins through faith in Jesus

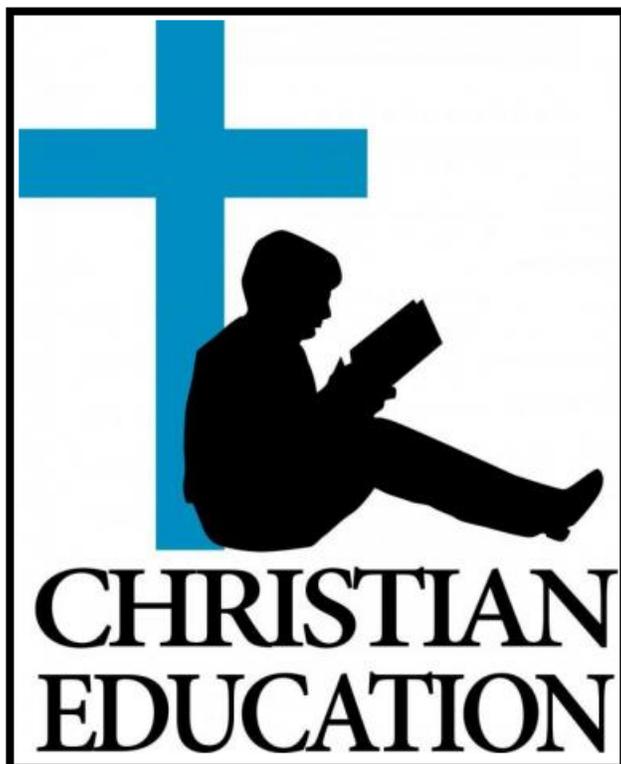
Christ. But they also need to know about how the world was created, and how God preserved the promise of the Messiah through the people of Israel, and how God has seen to the giving and preservation of the text of Scripture throughout the history of the world, both before and after Christ.

Christ is the central figure of Scripture, and his perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection from the dead is the central message. But we all need to know that Jesus did not suddenly appear on a divine whim. The entire Old Testament pointed to his coming.

Along with the beginning of a new school year outside of church, this is also the beginning of another school year in the church. Starting on September 13, there will be 3 classes offered every Sunday morning; Sunday School (elementary), a "young adult class" (middle and high school), and the Adult Bible Class. All of these classes are offered for the continued spiritual growth of the members of the congregation. But to that end, these classes are not all the same

We read in Proverbs 22, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." The chief purpose of Sunday school is to teach children the basic history of the world, as it is presented in the Old and New Testaments. This is a foundational knowledge which will serve them as they grow in their understanding of the Faith.

The purpose of the young adult class is to transition young people from being children into being adults—showing them how the events of the Bible relate to the world in which they live. The teenage years are an important  
(Continued on next page)



(Christian Education)

time in a person's life for the formation of their worldview. If our youth are taught how they can view their whole life and the world through the lens of Scripture, they will be equipped to deal with the various challenges that the devil and the sinful world are going to throw at them.

And finally, the Adult Bible class is offered to facilitate the spiritual growth of Christians for their entire life. No one can ever “know it all” or “know too much” about God and His Word. There is always room for more understanding in our hearts and minds.

As we consider the importance of learning and growing in the Christian faith, we need to remember, though, that this growth does not come from ourselves. When we study God's Word, God himself is active in us through the it—nourishing and strengthening the faith which He gave us at our Baptisms.

So in this coming year, if you (and your children) have been participants in the various classes offered in our church, wonderful. Keep coming. But, if you haven't joined us before, know that you are both welcome and encouraged to do so.

Thank you, as well, to both Chris Hoffman and Star Morgan for their willingness to assist in our church's education efforts in the coming year. Chris will be teaching the young adult class, while Star will be the Sunday School Administrator. Both of them will be installed during the service on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

(Life without Life)

And we, as Christians, need to provide alternatives to murder through adoption and other caring ministries.

“You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:13-14 ESV) Life begins at conception. Each child conceived is a gift from God. Please continue to pray for everyone involved. Pray for the mothers who believe they have no options besides aborting their children. Pray for our nation, that God will move their hearts to reject the senseless killing

of children. Pray for our government’s leaders, that they will stand up to pressure and do what is moral and just in the eyes of God. And pray for the abortion providers, that God would lead them to repentance, that they may stand before Him in the final judgment cleansed of their sins through faith in Jesus.

-Rev. Paul Fries, ELS Communication Dir.