



Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

Newsletter - May 2006

May 7

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY & TEACHER RECOGNITION

In the gospel, Jesus says *I am the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep*. In the second reading for this day, St. John comments *Jesus Christ laid down His life for us –and we ought to lay down our lives for one another*. He encourages us to help those in need.

On this first Sunday of the month, we will be collecting food and money for the *Daily Bread Ministry* as one way we offer help. (See related article on Page 4)

On good Shepherd Sunday we'll also recognize those who have shepherded on children and youth during the past school year –our faithful Sunday School teachers. They deserve our support and encouragement as they pass the faith on to the next generation.

May 14 - MOTHERS' DAY

The theme for the day comes from this Sunday's reading from First John: *Let us love one another because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God*. Certainly a mother's love is an example of what John is talking about.

In the gospel for this Sunday, Jesus employs the metaphor of the vine and the branches. While he is reminding us of the need to stay connected to Him and to one another, it also reminds us of the vital connection between family members.

Our Sunday School is again preparing Mothers' Day booklets for each mother present at the service. This year's booklets will have a new twist, so don't miss the opportunity to receive one.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON SUNDAYS

May 21

PICNIC IN THE PARK – WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM

The annual picnic has become a highlight of Spring at Resurrection. This year we're holding it on the Sunday before Memorial Day weekend rather than the Sunday after –with the hope that it will be a little cooler.

Please note that our worship service will begin one hour earlier, at 10 a.m.

For those of you who haven't attended it in the past, the service is in the pavilion (i.e. in the shade) at Raymond Rimkus Park on Poss Road near Evers Road in Leon Valley. (Poss is the traffic light north of Grissom on Bandera.)

After worship, we enjoy a picnic lunch in the pavilion and the surrounding picnic tables.

(See related article on Page 2)

May 28

ASCENSION SUNDAY

In the church, Easter is not a day but a season of fifty days of rejoicing. The season reminds us that the risen Lord Jesus appeared to his followers a number of times during the weeks following His resurrection. On the last Sunday in May we hear the account from the Book of Acts of his ascension – His departure from His disciples. Henceforth, he will be present through His Spirit.



June 4

PENTECOST & CONFIRMATION

The Easter season draws to a close and we begin a new season in the church year on the first Sunday in June with the feast of Pentecost, which celebrates the event recorded in Acts, chapter 2. We'll celebrate the rite of Confirmation on Pentecost.

WORK DAY

SATURDAY, May 13 Beginning at 9:00 AM.

You're all invited to come for work and fellowship on the first Saturday in May. In the Spring there is always a lot to be done – both big jobs and small ones – inside and out. There's building maintenance –things like changing air conditioning filters and light bulbs, tightening loose screws, etc. And don't forget the yard work. Ted Berquam would really like to see you on May 13th.

and THANK YOU

We thank everyone who worked on *Walk Through Jerusalem*, the *Egg Hunt*, the *Flower Cross*, the *Easter Breakfast*, and the *worship services*. We appreciate the donations of food for the cast meals and the breakfast, and the flowers for the cross and the church. We also thank those who stayed to clean up after the events. We really appreciate all your efforts.

We also thank those members who brought friends and relatives with them to Walk Through Jerusalem and the Easter services. It was wonderful having so many visitors.

ADULT BIBLE CLASSES

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday evenings at 6:30 the *Women's Bible Study Group* is exploring the Book of Genesis under Louise Jones' leadership. She has studied Genesis with Bible Study fellowship and has a great deal of knowledge about the first book of the Bible.

SUNDAY

On Sunday mornings at 9:30 am, Louise Jones leads a class on First Peter in the "large nursery" class room.

The letters of Peter are in the back of your Bible, so you may not have read them recently. But in just a few chapters they teach us a lot about the Christian life, and the hope that is our in Jesus Christ.

SUNDAY also at 9:30 a.m. "WHAT JESUS MEANT"

It's not enough to ask "What would Jesus do", writes author Garry Wills, "we must ask what Jesus *meant* by his strange words and deeds."

Jesus did many things we wouldn't or shouldn't do "to show us that he is *not* like us... that he has an authority as arbitrary as God's... he is a divine mystery walking."

Garry Wills has written a devotional, not a scholarly book – but a devotion that engages both heart and mind to the benefit of both. Wills thinks Jesus "intended to reveal the Father to us, and to show that He is the only-begotten Son of that Father. What he signified is always more challenging than we expect, more outrageous, more egregious."

In the adult class in fellowship hall on Sundays at 9:30 am we'll discuss Wills' "What Jesus Meant".

Listening to St. John Sundays in Church

During the Easter season, most of the gospel readings are from the gospel according to St. John, and our second lesson each Sunday is from the First Letter of John.

In many ways, First John is a commentary on his gospel. For example, just read the first chapter of John's gospel, and then turn to the first chapter of the letter, and then you'll see how the letter elaborates on the gospel.

In his gospel, John never refers to himself by name but rather as simply "another disciple" or the "disciple whom Jesus loved". This "beloved disciple was the only one of the twelve to live to old age (maybe 90), and to die a natural death. He wrote late in his life, and gives us a mature reflection on faith and life.

When John was dying, his disciples asked him if he had any last message for them.

*"Little children,
you should love one another."*

He repeated it again and again - and they asked if there was anything else.

*"Love is enough, for it is the
Lord's greatest commandment."*

Each Sunday morning we read only a few paragraphs from John's letter. To really appreciate it, you should read the whole letter at one sitting. It's only four pages.

Then on another day go back to it and read the first chapter and study it. Take it one chapter at a time over a period of several days, for John presents the heart of the Christian message in this letter.

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Carol's Corner

By Carol Reaves

May Fellowship PICNIC IN THE PARK

The theme for our annual picnic is AMERICANA! (as in Mom and Apple Pie). It will be held in Raymond Rimkus park in Leon Valley on May 21.

Church Service with communion will begin at 10:00 am (as last year) with a potluck luncheon to follow. Games for one and all will be hosted by the Education Committee.

Clipboards will be passed the two Sundays prior with meats designated and other major categories listed with amounts needed. Please try to think of your best all-American recipes to share.

This year we will have a golf cart available to take those who have difficulty ambulating long distances or over rough terrain.

Helping Hands Fundraiser

A Christians Helping Hands Fundraiser was held March 31 to help a family in our congregation who are experiencing some very real financial difficulties.

Brisket dinner plates were sold for \$5.00 each (147 dinners) and donations contributed in addition to the plates amounted to \$1,450. Thrivent matched our funds raised, so the family will receive a check in the amount of \$2900.

I wish to thank not only those who donated and purchased tickets and those who donated prepared food but the ladies and gentlemen who came to assist with preparing the plates: Reta Gochee, Diane and Juanita Talamentez, Jeanette Smith, Jan and Bill Nobiling, Jim Baker and Jennifer McCarthy, my daughter from Colorado.

FELLOWSHIP WISH LIST: Large divided styrofoam plates, 12 oz plastic cups, rolls of colored table covers, as well as large cans of coffee and sugar.

Pastor's Page

By Pastor Jeff Lange

THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

The *San Antonio Express News* and the *Sunday Times* had articles on the *Gospel of Judas*. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* ran stories – all leading up to a two-hour TV special.

For those who may be curious about the *Gospel of Judas*, it's not a gospel in the traditional sense – it's only seven pages and alleges to report on conversations that Jesus had with Judas and other disciples over a three day period – and that's it.

It does include one interesting line not in the other gospels: "*Jesus laughed.*" You won't find that in the others, although Jesus did tell humorous stories.

It was probably written about 140 years after Jesus' death and resurrection (more than a century after Mark's gospel); however, the copy discovered in the mid 1970's is from the third century. One scholar said of it: "It tells us nothing about the historical Jesus, nothing about the historical Judas. It only tells us what, 100 years later, Gnostics were doing with what they found in the canonical gospels."

The "Gnostics" were originally a group outside Christianity who followed a philosophy based on ideas in Plato. In the late second century some Gnostics became Christians and then attempted to merge their philosophy with Christian teaching. They produced a series of short narratives recording alleged conversations between Jesus and one or more disciples which express their ideas. These short documents they called "gospels" – and you might have heard of them during the

discussions of the *Davinci Code*, which made a passing reference to them.

In almost any course on early church history, one briefly studies the Gnostics. In addition, when studying the gospels, parallels from Gnostic texts are sometimes noted. A collection of their writings is still available. Hence you shouldn't think that their writings are a secret, or that the manuscripts were destroyed (as *The Davinci Code* implied).

Church historians are interested in these groups and their documents because they illustrate the diversity of thought that existed in the early Christian church. Orthodox Christian teaching – and eventually creeds and the canon – developed as a reaction to varied ideas (and speculations) that came into Christianity as it encountered other philosophies and religions.

If there is sufficient interest, we might offer an adult class on the early history of the church, and how doctrine was shaped.

"THE DAVINCI CODE" THE MOVIE

The publicity for the movie based on Dan Brown's best selling novel has already begun in anticipation of its opening on May 19.

A brainy thriller with a gripping mix of murder and myth, it generated some controversy when it first appeared. The heart of the mystery is a secret that goes back to Leonardo DaVinci and maybe even to Jesus. (*Clue*: Who really sat at Jesus' right at the Last Supper?)

The fictional characters in the novel make some statements (in lengthy detail) that are critical of Christianity and the Bible. Often they mix half truths with

speculation and even falsehood in what the character then describes as the real (secret) history of what happened. Most people don't know enough about church history to realize that they are being misled.

The questions raised by the novel – and presumably again by the movie include:

- ÿ How did the Bible come to be? Or, why were these books included, and not others?
- ÿ How trustworthy are the gospels? Is there more "secret" information about Jesus contained in other sources?
- ÿ Exactly what was in those "secret" books that weren't included in the Bible? Did the church order them to be destroyed?
- ÿ What was the role of the Emperor Constantine (and presumably the bishops of that time) in deciding what would be included in the Bible? What else happened at that time that had significance for the church today?

Questions like those listed above have been raised before by skeptics as challenges to Christianity. Usually those who raise them don't want an honest discussion based on the facts, rather they are employed to raise doubts about the witness of the church.

The release of the movie might be an opportunity to review a little church history, so that we're more familiar with how the Bible came together. In this case, greater understanding can produce more confidence in the witness of scripture.

Knowledge is helpful in answering those who might be misled by the movie. So please take a look at the questions listed above, and let the pastor know which ones you might be interested in learning more about.

Update on Horizon Church and the Daily Bread Ministry

By Rose Barrows

Beginning May 1, we will be teaming up with Landmark Church, located on Huebner Road, to serve the Daily Bread ministry.

Horizon Church, our current partner, is in a transition. They will be temporarily holding services at the Leon Valley Conference Center until they can locate a permanent home for their church. They are asking for prayers in their search for the right property.

On the First Sunday in May, we will be taking our monthly collection for the Daily Bread Ministry. If you wish to contribute by check, please make it payable to Lutheran Church of the Resurrection (or LCR). Write "Daily Bread" in the memo line. LCR will then write a single check for the food ministry.

If you need further information, please talk to Louise Jones or Rose Barrows.

LCR & The Daily Bread Ministry

1st Quarter 2006 Report

So far this year, thanks to your generous contributions, the congregation of the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection has given the following to the Daily Bread ministry:

January	\$216
February	\$175
March	\$209
April	\$205

Thank you for being a blessing to those in need, according to God's word: **"...I tell you the truth, whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."** *Matthew 25:40*

Thrivent: Is it New?

By Jim Baker

Howdy, folks. I ran into Sam Melchizedek the other day and he asked me what all the fuss was lately, about something called Thrivent. Seems he's never heard a thing about it until the last few weeks at LCR. Of course, that left me staring at him with egg on my face. I, Jim Baker, have been your primary Thrivent Congregational Coordinator for more years than I would like to admit. I just haven't been too good at it!

Anyhow, that is all changing. I went to training in March to learn what exactly I am supposed to be doing for us. I learned a lot. I learned that we can get money to help people or organizations in our community by holding a fundraiser, such as the barbecue plate sale, and asking Thrivent for matching funds. I also learned that we can do fundraisers for things we need at the church and still ask for matching funds. Example: the Easter breakfast. We sold lots of tickets and Thrivent will match what we raised to help us get one step closer to the new sound system we need.

Is there a catch to all of this? Yes, of course. Thrivent is a Lutheran organization that wants to help us by providing competitive financial products and services, to make sure that our financial programs match our dreams and goals for the future. Some of our members own insurance or mutual funds with Thrivent for just that reason. Unfortunately, there aren't that many of us. The more members a congregation has, the more money we can ask for. It's that simple.

How can you help? That is even simpler! For just \$10 per year, you can become an associate member. It will benefit the church because our numbers will be higher, and we will have more "household families" to claim when we actually do a fundraiser. We are

supposed to have six households involved with every one. We have always managed to just scrape by that requirement, but it would be great to list so many of you who already do so much for the church instead of always listing the same six families.

How will it benefit you? Well, for one thing, you will start receiving *Thrivent Magazine*. Every issue is filled with stories of ordinary members serving in extra-ordinary ways, congregations reaching out to meet the needs of their communities, tips for healthy and productive living, and practical financial topics to help you achieve financial security. Furthermore, you will get to pick two member benefits. There are all kinds of devotional books, music CDs, and financial planning guides available.

If you are interested in more information, just ask me for some brochures. I gave some to Sam Melchizedek and he said, "Jim Baker, you have really made my day! I was looking for a way to reduce the stress in my life, and that there Calming Moments book and matching music CD sound like just the thing I need. Sign me up!"

A Letter of Thanks

Thank you!! My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for your prayers and concerns for me while I was "under the weather", as my Mother would say. Such is one of the many things that make LCR a special place to worship. We are small in number, but being one of that number has many blessings. Caring for others, the desire to share, and a place for friendships to develop are just a few of the blessings we receive at LCR.

Pastor's Homilies and our beautiful music make our Church a spiritual anchor for the week to come.

May God's Blessing rest upon each of you.
Louise Jones

