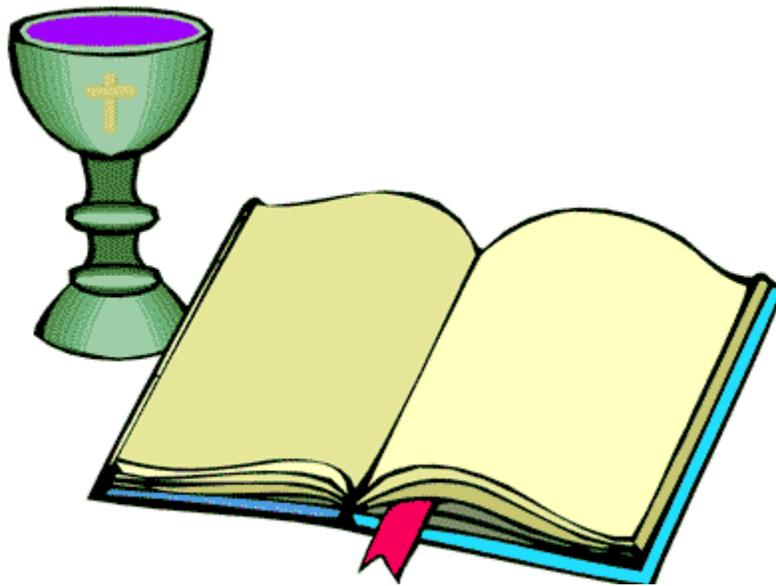


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings one last time from the parsonage while Anna and I are in it! This Spring I received and accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church, Mayville, WI. It is with a combination sadness and joy that I leave Augsburg. It is sad because Augsburg has been my home for the last nearly six years. I have gotten to know many of her members and some of them very well. Yet this is how God does things through the office of the public ministry and the call, and this is where the joy comes in. He sends a pastor to continue working once one has left, and then, when it is time, another will come to take his place. I have watered where Pastor Bruce planted, and I know that the brother pastor or pastors serving the vacancy, and whoever it is who accepts the call to Augsburg next, will water where I have planted. "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building (1 Cor. 3:7-9)." Because you are God's building, neither you nor I need to fear about our futures: God will continue to bless us both through His Word, working in me so that I might preach and teach well at St. John's, but also working in you through vacancy pastors and your next called pastor through His Word and Sacraments.



*"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." ...Philippians 1:6b*

With those ideas in mind, we conclude with a look at Luther's thoughts on the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "May you will come about on earth as it is in heaven." "Thus far we have prayed that God's name may be hallowed by us and that his kingdom may prevail among us. These two points embrace all that pertains to God's glory and to our salvation, in

which we appropriate God with all his treasures. But there is just as great need for us to keep firm hold on these two things and never to allow ourselves to be torn from them (BoC, p.448).”

As Luther continues, he describes how, once one has been brought to faith, the devil, the world, and yes our own sinful flesh will wage war with us without stop. “For no one can believe how the devil opposes and obstructs their fulfillment (BoC, p.448).” Satan cannot stand it when we human beings, part of his kingdom by means of the fall, are lost to him by means of the grace of the Gospel of God. So, to prevent losing us and to keep from losing anyone else, he plots and deceives and raves and roars in all his might to fight off the Gospel.

“Therefore we who would be Christians must surely expect to have the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies and must expect that they will inflict every possible misfortune and grief upon us (BoC, p.448).” Luther uses the word “expect” twice to show what Christ Himself said, that if we follow Him, we should expect trouble to come and to take up our crosses and follow Him. “For where God’s Word is preached, accepted, or believed, and bears fruit, there the holy and precious cross will also not be far behind (BoC, pp.448-449).”

We already know that God’s Will is done without our prayers. Yet so that we do not lose His kingdom ourselves, and to be guarded against the devil, the world, and our flesh, we were taught by our Lord Christ to pray this prayer, especially this petition. “But we must pray for our own sake so that his will may be done also among us without hindrance, in spite of their fury, so that they may accomplish nothing and we may remain steadfast against all violence and persecution and submit to the will of God. Such prayer must be our protection and defense now to repulse and vanquish all that the devil, bishops, tyrants, and heretics can do against our gospel. [Yet despite all the alarm of this life, the enemies around us, we still have the Gospel of Easter—that our Lord Jesus Christ is crucified, dead, and risen, so that we know Satan and all his forces are “finished.” So Luther continues:] Let them all rage and try their worst, let them plot and plan how to suppress and eliminate us so that their will and scheme may prevail... We have this comfort and boast: that the will and purpose of the devil and of all our enemies shall and must fail and come to naught, no matter how proud, secure, and powerful they think they are (BoC, p.449).” Jesus is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! In Jesus’ Name. Amen!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

*For any emergencies between now and May 20, you may continue to reach me as your pastor. After that, you may contact an elder to get pastoral care from your future vacancy pastor(s). God’s blessings to you all in Jesus through His Word and Sacraments!!!*