



Pastor's Ponderings

A hymn favorite of mine is "My Life Flows On in Endless Song," by Robert Lowry. For me it is a lilting, powerful, contemplative hymn. Its refrain echoes a strong trust in God:

"NO storm can shake my in-most calm while to the
Rock I'm clinging. Since Christ is Lord of heaven and
earth, how can I keep from singing?"

The song's stanzas repeat the ability to sing despite
struggles and hardship.

Grief, illness, Covid anxiety, world situations like war,
famine, and disasters, national distress, family situations,
depression and more can be endured through trust in
Jesus, the cornerstone, the rock to which we cling.

"What though the darkness gather round? Songs in
the night he giveth."

We trust more now as we are in the Easter season. We can
sing more openly amidst the storms of life and be assured
that we are not alone, and that on the cross we have been
given the promise of "starting over" through God's
forgiveness. Also death, which we anticipate from the day
we are born, is less of a focus; for Jesus, in his resurrection
has it conquered. And we, free of this burden, can prioritize
life, service, hope and singing as we move forward in our
lives.

"Through all the tumult and the strife. I hear that
music ringing. It finds an echo in my soul. How can I
keep from singing?"

May "in-most calm" grip you this month and a renewed
sense of singing fill your heart and bring you hope.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

"Be still and know that I am God" *Psalm 46:10*



New Bible Study: Philippians

In May, we will be diving into Paul's letter to the
Philippians. All are invited to attend at
Augustana Lutheran Church on Fridays, 10 AM –
11:30 AM. It will be held in person and on Zoom. Please
ask Pastor Fred for the Zoom link.

Come to one or all of the classes!



Happy Mother's Day!
Sunday, May 8

Become a "Link"

Prayer plays a vital role in the life of TOL. The Prayer Chain
ministry remains active as it is reorganized. Please
consider becoming a "link" in the Prayer Chain. If you
have any questions, please contact Judy through the
church office phone number (716-836-4868).

Also, we welcome the return of the Prayer Partners
on Sunday, May 1, after a long absence due to Covid.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2022

"The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). Pray that
we might find clarity and be reassured of God's love and
attention through the psalmist's description of a shepherd
who restores, leads, nourishes and accompanies us,
calming our fears and showing us mercy.

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TOL Library and Book Sale

Additional help is still needed to organize the
materials (books for adults and children,
puzzles, etc.). Please contact Nancy if you
have any questions—or if you would like to
help (716-836-4868).

Welcome Back!



The Coffee Bar will reopen in the narthex
beginning **Sunday, May 1** at 10:00 AM.
You're invited to stop by to enjoy good
coffee and fellowship before the worship
service begins!



ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2022

Among your siblings in Christ, who has
surprised you with their welcoming spirit,
generosity, wisdom or eagerness to share their faith? Give
thanks to God for people who unexpectedly enrich our
lives.

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Worship With Us Every Sunday

The Reverend Frederick Kopp, Pastor
Worship at 11:00 AM

Sunday School, May 15, 9:45 AM
Augustana Lutheran, Sunday Worship at 9:30 AM

Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2022

Promise to respond to those we encounter who are struggling, homeless, lonely, grieving or ill; ask the Spirit to encourage, equip and guide us when we feel ill-equipped to love and care for our neighbor.

Pray for the safety and well-being of those directly impacted by the war in **Ukraine** — both the people inside its borders and the nearly 4 million who have left the country. Pray for peace, wisdom, justice, repentance and reconciliation, and give thanks for the assistance provided by Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and our partners and companion churches in Ukraine and across Eastern Europe.

Remember in prayer the conflict in **Ethiopia**, which has caused displacement, suffering and loss of life among the most vulnerable — women, children and older adults. Pray for relief, hope and strength for those who have been impacted and for an end to the violence and ethnic discrimination. Give thanks for the relief work of Lutheran World Relief and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and for the financial support of Lutheran Disaster Response.

Memorial Day Remember, honor and give thanks for members of the armed forces who sacrificed their lives for the sake of peace. Pray for those who serve in harm's way today and for our neighbors around the world who have served their own countries in pursuit of peace, justice and freedom.

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Hope and Healing—A Christian Cancer Support Group Augustana Lutheran Church and on Zoom

Linda Sokoley leads this 4th Tuesday-of-the-Month support group for those who are in a cancer journey and in need of hope and healing. Family, friends and those who have beat cancer are invited to attend (3:00 PM to 4:00 PM).

Please phone Linda at 716-694-2451 or email her at lsokoley@hotmail.com if you would like to attend.



Trinity Tidings

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April Mission, Thank You

Thank you for your donations in support of TOL's Sandwich Ministry that will help defray costs of food and needed supplies. Volunteers prepare 100 sandwiches each week, which are served for lunch at Friends of Night People in Buffalo.

May Mission: Lutheran Charities of WNY (LCWNY)

The focus this month is the organization's need for continued financial support from area congregations, businesses, foundations, and agencies.

"Lutheran Charities of WNY is a human service ministry of the Niagara Frontier Conference (NFC) of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Lutheran Charities is a mutual expression of our love and concern for our neighbors. This is accomplished by providing care for people in need and also by giving support to local Lutheran social ministry programs. Lutheran Charities provides a more visible and viable force within our community in terms of dollar amount as well as program support."

[from: www.wnylutherancharities.org.] ©Copyright 2022 Lutheran Charities of WNY. All rights reserved.

More information on LCWNY and the agencies receiving support can be found at the website.

Please use the marked envelopes located in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Lutheran Charities of WNY).

Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations in support of the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran Pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated. Suggested items needed are listed below.



Please place your donations in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday – Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon).

- Canned fruits, vegetables, beans, soup, tuna and chicken
- Pasta, Mac-and-Cheese
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Spaghetti and pasta sauces
- Cereal and other breakfast items (oatmeal, grits)
- Instant potatoes
- Paper products, feminine hygiene products
- Gift cards (Tops or Wegmans) (mail to church office)



**Monday Afternoon Adult Ed. with Charlie Schmidtke
1:00 PM in the Fireside Room and on Zoom**

We hope you will join us as we continue studying world religions. Come for any or all of the classes! Please contact Charlie if you would like a Zoom invitation.

May 9 & 23: Beliefs of the Sacred Peoples

**Table Talk Discussion at TOL
Second Wednesday of the Month
6:30 PM in the Fireside Room and on Zoom**

Please join Pastor Fred and Charlie Schmidtke for Table Talk on **Wednesday evening, May 11 at 6:30 PM**. The topic for discussion will be “Why do bad things happen to good people?” If you would like a Zoom invitation, please contact Charlie.

Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action

Hearts and Hands (HNH) continues to serve Amherst, Clarence, North Tonawanda, and the Southern Tier and is now welcoming all residents of Erie County and Eastern Niagara County.



- In-Home Support includes: Food Preparation, Laundry, Coffee and Conversation, Housekeeping, Minor Home Repairs
- Caregiver Respite Services include: Canine Caregivers, Coffee and Conversation, Friendly Visiting at Home, Sharing a Meal

For more program details and information (and how to become a volunteer), please visit the HNH website at www.hnhcares.org/services or call 716-406-8311.

TOL is a part of this community of volunteers—Neighbor Helping Neighbor Volunteer Program!

Thank You Received!

TOL recently received a note from Ronald McDonald House Charities of WNY (RMHC). (Thank you to Nancy Jackson for delivering the tabs!)

“Something So Simple...Can Mean So Much!”

“When pull tabs are donated to be recycled, they are weighed to determine their value. The money received purchases household items for our Buffalo House and Hospital Programs.”

“Thank you for collecting and delivering the pull tabs. We really do appreciate it. ~~ RMHC

Please continue collecting the tabs! For more information on RMHC, please visit the website at www.rmhcwny.org.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2022

Remember in prayer students at college, university and seminary as they prepare for final exams, celebrate graduation or begin their careers, that they might find opportunities to use their gifts, faith and passion in service to their neighbors and communities.

“O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me” (Psalm 30:2). Pray for healing, comfort and peace for all who suffer sorrow, trauma, illness, fear or hardship, and ask the Spirit to equip us for responding to our neighbors in need with love, hope and support.

Pray that we might not grow weary or apathetic about the needs of our neighbor, especially when their difficulties and situations seem complicated, overwhelming or distant from us. Ask the Spirit to nurture within us love and concern that are enduring, impartial and wise.

Praise God for everything that brings joy, encouragement, hope or brightness into our lives.

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Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithe.ly is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at www.trinityoldlutheran.com or download the Tithe.ly app to your smartphone. Please call the church office if you have any questions (716-836-4868).



Giving by mail: Please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.

WWI Hosts May Coffee Hour

Mark your calendar for **May 15** for our next coffee hour following the 11:00 AM worship service. Come be a part of this fellowship event and catch up with your Church family!

(Ladies—a sign-up sheet has been posted for those who would like to bring in goodies or to help with clean up—all women are invited to participate.)

Recycling Your Cans and Bottles



Your donations may be placed in the marked container in the hallway near the bulletin board—or easily redeem them at the Bottle and Can Redemption Center located in Sheridan-Parkhurst Plaza, 2790 Sheridan Drive in Tonawanda. TOL has an account there—anyone can go in and drop off bottles and cans for the TOL account.

**Armed Forces
Day
May 21**



**Memorial Day
Observed
May 30**

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke—Study Notes

This is the first of four articles looking at Judaism. The first two articles looked at what it meant to be Jewish during Jesus' time. Part I focused on the historical background for answering the question. Part II looked at the variety of Jews in Jesus' day and Parts III and IV will look at what it means to be Jewish today.

Here is a primary question to ask whether looking back at Jesus' time or trying to understand what it means to be Jewish today: "Is being Jewish an ethnic, racial, political/national (Zionistic), religious or social category?" In order to understand the complexity of this question, we'll examine some of the historical and religious dimensions involved.

Part I: Judaism in Jesus' Day

A common biblical time-line puts Noah in 2100 BC, Abraham in 1800 BC, and the Exodus and Moses around 1300 BC. All we know from these time periods is based on Oral Tradition; there are no other historical works or archeological evidence for these people. The first written accounts occur with the original Torah being written around 1000 BC. The Torah and the other books of the Old Testament for Christians and the Hebrew Canon for Jews is sometimes inconsistent with other historical works of the time or of archeological findings. Determining what is historically accurate is very problematic in an oral tradition.

Some key dates/events that occurred during the written traditions include: King David in 1000 BC; Solomon built the first Temple around 950 BC; the Assyrians conquered the Kingdom of Israel (which is roughly northern Israel today) in 722 BC; many Jews were taken into captivity in Babylon and the temple was destroyed from 597/586 BC to 538 BC; building of the Second Temple began in 515 BC; Ezra read the Torah at the temple gate and led the second wave of Jews returning to Judea from exile in 458 BC; the Second Temple was destroyed and the Diaspora (scattering of Jews) began in 77 AD.

A brief history providing a context for understanding what it means to be Jewish includes: Abraham had his first son Ishmael (who had 12 sons, becoming the 12 tribes of the Arabs and eventually Islam) with the servant Hagar; then he had a second son, Isaac, with his wife Sarah. After Sarah's death, he took another wife by whom he had six sons. Abraham means "a father of many nations". He is considered to be the progenitor of many nations and tribes mentioned in the Bible. Through his nephew Lot he was also related to the Israelites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, Amalekites, Kenizzites, Midianites; and also the Moabites and Ammonites. Abraham lived to see his son marry Rebekah, and to see the birth of twin grandsons Jacob and Esau. He died and was buried in the cave of Machpelah by his sons Isaac and Ishmael. He is called the father of faith by Jews, Christians and Muslims because of his willingness to sacrifice his son (depending on tradition either Isaac or Ishmael). Jacob had 12 sons which became the 12 tribes of Israel.

The Jews can find their cultural roots in Canaan (basically Israel and Jordan) because Jacob's sons married Canaanite women and blended their customs and beliefs with their wives; some of these beliefs became Kosher laws. A list of some basic Canaanite beliefs includes:

- Gods controlled war and determined the outcomes. For Jews when they won, it was God's doing; when they lost, they examined their leaders and behavior to determine

why God was angry. This belief became the root for our issue today: why do bad things happen to good people?

- Ritual and physical purification were essential.
- Temples, and later Mosques, were built on Canaanite temple sites.
- Sacrificing to the gods/God is important. It is the primary temple activity and explains the importance of an altar.
- Separate dairy and meats; never use the same bowl for both.
- Heavily salt meat for preservation and bleed an animal before storing.

Canaan's language was Semite, becoming the basis for Hebrew and other language groups in the area, including Arabic.

Jacob's sons ended up in Egypt (Goshen) with Joseph being a leader for the Pharaoh. Their descendants became slaves and Moses led them out of Egypt where they roamed the Sinai desert and received all the laws from God on Mt. Sinai. The original Torah was based on the oral tradition of previous centuries. The Torah that Ezra read was the revised edition written during the Babylonian captivity (scholars believed this version was the fourth).

The reality is that most Jews continued to live in the area we call Israel and Jordan from the time of Abraham coming into the Promised Land to the destruction of the Temple and the Diaspora (1800 BCE – 77 AD. Circa 1050 BC, David unifies the 12 tribes of Jacob's sons and makes Jerusalem (owned by no tribe and believed to be the site of sacrificing Isaac) the capital. David's son, Solomon, built the first temple around 950 BC. At this time the tribes divided into two kingdoms: North is Israel with Samaria as its capital. The south is Judea with Jerusalem as its capital. These two will eventually split into three sections before and during Jesus' life: Galilee, Samaria and Judea.

The temple was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians and many Judeans were taken into exile in Babylon—known as the Captivity. Some Jews, however, were exiled even earlier. The Captivity lasted from 597/586 BC to 538 BC. It was a pivotal event in defining what it meant to be Jewish in Jesus' day.

During the Captivity, there were two groups of Judeans: 1) Wealthy, educated, priests, etc. who were sent to live in a community in Babylon, redefined what it meant to be Jewish and 2) Those who stayed in Judea such as farmers and craftsmen. They experienced famine during this time. They also were unorganized and scattered throughout the land; but they were free from the control of the priests and wealthy. They squatted on good land and in homes left by the wealthy. When those in exile returned, there was conflict over property ownerships. Those from exile took charge politically and religiously. They had accepted responsibility for the conquest by Babylon and redefined who they were and what was important in being Jewish.

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Coming Up!

Chiavetta's BBQ Chicken Dinner at TOL!

Friday, June 17, 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Volunteers are needed!

Watch for more details in the June Tidings and Sunday bulletins!