



Pastor's Ponderings

Word

I, who live by words, am wordless when
I try my words in prayer. All language turns
To silence. Prayer will take my words and then
Reveal the emptiness. The stifled voice learns
To hold its peace, to listen with the heart,
To silence that is joy, is adoration.
The self is shattered, all words torn apart
In this strange patterned time of contemplation
That, in time, breaks time, breaks word, breaks me,
And then in silence, leaves me healed and mended.
I leave, returned to language, for I see
Through words, even when all words are ended.
I who live by words, am wordless
When I turn me to the Word to pray. Amen.

Madeleine L'Engle

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Psalm 119:105

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only
son, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14

Some words that enter my mind in prayer are Faith, Hope,
Love, Forgiveness, Thanksgiving, Joy, Humility, and
Creation. What words enter your mind this Autumn while
being in the presence of the WORD?

A Blessed November to you,
Pastor Fred he/him/his



New! Advent Bible Study

Pastor Fred will lead this three-week Bible Study on Friday
mornings, **10:00 AM to 11:30 AM, at Augustana LC**. The
classes will meet on **December 2, 9 and 16**.
A Zoom invite will be offered for those who can't attend in
person. Hope to see you there!

The first Sunday in Advent is November 27.

Table Talk Wednesday, November 9



On the second Wednesday of the month
from **6:30 to 8:00 PM**, we meet in the Fireside Room for Table
Talk (also on Zoom—contact Charlie Schmidtke for the link).
This year's theme is "Belief," which is based on the acclaimed
Oprah Winfrey series. The videos are about 15-20 minutes
long and are followed by discussion. We'll be exploring varied
ways that people around the world celebrate their spirituality
and their search for meaning in this life and beyond. Each
session stands alone, so join us when you can.

Honor our Veterans at TOL Sunday, November 13 at 11:00 AM



Please join us for worship when we will honor our
Veterans in song, worship and prayer. (**Please note:**
the date has been changed from Friday, November 11.)

Gathering Items for Thanksgiving Meals to be Provided by Good Shepherd's LC Food Pantry

You are invited to help the pantry collect items needed to
assemble Thanksgiving dinners that will be distributed to the
families it serves. "Fixings" needed for each dinner are listed
below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Canned Sweet Corn | Boxed Stuffing Mix |
| Canned Green Beans | Instant Potatoes |
| Canned Cranberry Sauce | Turkey Gravy (jarred or mix) |
| Boxed brownies/cookie mixes or cake mixes and frostings | Donations of disposable foil roasting pans (Tip: bring your items in a foil pan.) |

Please leave your donations in the elevator entrance (Tuesdays
through Fridays, 9:00 AM to Noon), or in the narthex (look for
the sign.) The deadline for TOL donations is Sunday,
November 13. Thank you for helping others to enjoy a holiday
meal with their families.

Reminder for TOL Bakers— Election Day Bake Sale!



We welcome your donations of cookies,
breads, pies, brownies and cupcakes for the
sale on **Tuesday, November 8** (no cakes, please—they are
difficult to cut and plate).

Also, if you can help with pricing the goodies on Monday
evening, **November 7**, please speak to Earlene. Thank you!



We invite you to join us for worship
Sundays at 11:00 AM!
(in-church or on Zoom)

Honoring Veterans on Sunday, November 13
TOL Worship at 11:00 AM
Please join us!

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.

The TOL Prayer Partners are available following worship for anyone in need of prayers.

The Prayer Chain is available to anyone having a prayer request. Please contact the church office with your request (716-836-4868).

ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2022

All Saints Day Give thanks and praise to God for saints who have helped enrich our faith in Christ, inspired us to lives of service, cared for us, demonstrated grace when we needed it most, taught us life skills, influenced our values and stirred our hope and joy.

Pray that we might confess our role in the climate change wreaking havoc throughout the world and might grasp the urgency of managing and caring for the earth, its resources and all living things — fragile gifts that God has entrusted to our use, care and restoration.

Pray for those affected by wildfires, flooding, droughts and hurricanes, especially people struggling through immediate and long-term recovery. Ask the Spirit to inspire our generosity toward and involvement in the work of Lutheran Disaster Response and its partners to bring relief, support, hope and resources to our neighbors in need.

Pray for a peaceful end to the war in Ukraine, and that the millions of people displaced from their homes and communities might find comfort, healing, hope and stability, returning to the daily lives and routines they once knew.

Pray that we will be generous and respectful in responding to and caring for those who cannot find secure shelter, pay for food or medical care, or support the children or older adults dependent on them.

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Mission for November: Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York (VOCWNY)

VOCWNY is located on Niagara Street in Buffalo and it continues providing support services to local veterans and their families, including: Benefits, Legal, Employment, Education, Housing, Programs, and Readjustment/Financial Counseling.

Mission: "The Veterans One-stop Center of WNY brings people, resources and organizations together to improve the quality of life for those who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and their families." From: www.vocwny.org.

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Please place your donations in the marked envelopes in the narthex or mail your donations to the church office (indicate on your check that it is designated for Veterans One-stop Center of WNY).

October Mission

Thank you for your donations to Operation Christmas Child that will help defray the costs of shipping the boxes and also completing the boxes. There is still time for you to put together a box—the deadline is Sunday, November 13.

Support for Local Food Pantries



Your donations in support of the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran's 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 to 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)





Adult Ed. Classes led by Charlie Schmidtke

Please join us in the TOL Fireside Room and Zoom on **Monday afternoons at**

1:00 PM. We will continue to look at who the "Real Jesus" may be through our review of some biblical passages, but for the most part, through sources and writings that are not included in the bible. For example, what the Coptic and Armenian churches teach about their beliefs in Jesus' childhood and life. We'll also delve into his childhood and young adult life from a variety of sources. The remaining classes for 2022 are listed below and the 2023 class schedule will appear in the December *Trinity Tidings*.

2022:

- Nov. 7 Jesus' family and his Jewish roots
- Nov. 21 The Coptic stories of Jesus' childhood
- Dec. 5 The Gnostic stories of Jesus' childhood

Changes to "Christian Cancer Support" Group

Linda Sokoley began the cancer support group almost one year ago, meeting once a month with others who were on their own cancer journeys. At this time, she is making changes to the program. These changes will also enable her to continue staying in contact with those from the group; providing needed support.



"To better meet the needs of those I support, I have decided to change the format from group to one on one. The 1:1 support can be through phone calls, emails, texts or in-person conversation and prayer." L.S.

If you would like to reach out to Linda, she can be contacted through Augustana LC's office at (716) 832-5720 or by the church email at augustchurch@yahoo.com.

Heidi's Hats



Many, many thanks to all of you who supported the battle against leukemia with a donation for a Heidi Hat. All money collected goes to Heidi's endowment for research. Hats and Heidi's brochure are still available in the narthex.

In the years since Heidi's death many advances have been made in the treatment of leukemia. Our prayer is that no child in the near future will ever again suffer from this horrible disease.

Diane S

RIDE: New Name "same wonderful program"

Augustana LC's Immigrant and Refugee Driving Program has been renamed—**Refugee Immigrant Driver Education (RIDE)**—and it is now up and running. The program continues to serve individuals who have their driver's permits and are ready to take driving lessons. As new participants enter the program, more volunteers will be needed. Some of the ways you can help are listed below (a complete list is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway near the church office). If you have any questions, please speak to Pastor Fred.



- Assisting with program registration/paperwork
- Being a liaison with Steven's Driving School
- Teaching and teaching assistants
- Office help
- Providing refreshments

ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2022

Veterans Day Honor and give thanks for those who have served in the military to secure freedom, justice, peace and security for our country and other nations. Remembering the sacrifices they have made on our behalf, pray for their families, their congregations, federal chaplains, and organizations that support and care for returning veterans.

Thanksgiving Day Remember that everything we have to sustain and renew us, physically and spiritually, comes from God. Let us promise to be generous with all we have and to tirelessly bear the good news that Jesus Christ, the bread of life for the world that is never depleted, is our hope and salvation.

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"Creation and Creativity"

The 2022 TOL Retreat at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center was an example of stepping into a world of "Creation and Creativity" with no idea of what to expect. Our weather was perfect this year, which allowed for stunning sunsets over the lake and the beginning of autumn colors.

We were a group of 17. Although many had attended before, some people were new—a moment in time unlike any other. As is ALWAYS the case on retreat, there were surprises, moments of grace, lots of laughter, a few tears, lots of connection and friendship. The words, "That's creative!!" were uttered often.

Charlie introduced us to creation stories from various cultures including Hopi, Māori, the Book of Changes (China), Lototo (Colombia) and Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse). Of course we also read and discussed both of the creation stories from Genesis. We broke into four groups and wrote new creation stories. It was interesting to watch the presentations and see our creative thinking. Individually, we cut and pasted words and pictures from magazines to make collages which spoke to our own journeys.

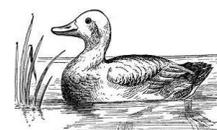
The Holy Spirit was definitely at work for Sunday's sermon. It began with Charlie and "creative energy" and went on with everyone contributing and creating. Fun and illuminating.

Along the way we enjoyed good meals and snacks, grapes from Pete's Westfield stash, a rousing game of Catch Phrase, and much more. So until next year, we'll hold onto the memories and hope to gather again. Maybe you'll join us!!

Diane S

Roof Repair Update

We reached our goal—many thanks to everyone who responded to this challenge! Thank you to the Property Committee for taking care of the arrangements for the repair work. All repairs are complete—thank you for your donations!



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

Study Notes: Islam

Part 2 – Mohammad's life, continued

After Mohammad built his grand Mosque in Medina, he wrote a constitution for all those who came to the Mosque to pray, preach, or teach. It was the first civil law instituted for any Arab tribe and eliminated vengeance as the basis for any decision. It called for peaceful relationships among Jews, Christians and his followers. Everyone in Medina signed it. For Mohammad the essence of faith was acceptance, inclusiveness and diversity. The Mosque became the community focal point for education and worship. Politically it was open to everyone and not tribally based. Respect for others (Christian, Jews, tribes) was expected. In 624 Mohammad had a new revelation that everyone at the Medina Mosque should face Mecca when they prayed. Christians and Jews refused. His followers began praying five times each day, facing Mecca; it became a new identity for them.

In 625 the Meccans attacked Medina, and Mohammad received a revelation to defend himself and fight back. Ever since this happened Muslims face the dilemma: Was this revelation about (1) Self-defense; (2) A justification for jihad against anyone who disagrees; (3) Permission to defend oneself against oppression; or (4) A call to eliminate rivals. There are vast differences of opinion and belief among all Muslims about these positions.

In 627 the famous Battle of the Trench happened with 10,000 Meccans vs. 3,000 Medinans. When the Meccans were running out of supplies, the Jews in Medina helped them. The battle was a stalemate and the Meccans left. When they did, Mohammad surrounded the Jews who assisted his enemies and demanded that they surrender. He condemned them for treason and killed 800 men and banished the women and children. The problem with this decision is that today some Muslims use this case as a justification for attacking Jews. The issue remains as to whether his attack against the Jews was justified (based on their treason and supporting his enemies) or was it an act of brutality. The answer usually depends on your view of Islam and what you think Mohammad really stood for. After the attack, he reiterated that the Medina constitution was based on a peaceful community among his followers, Christians and Jews. This constitution was discarded after he died. The loss of the constitution has changed the world forever (and not for the better). After the battle, Mohammad's reputation in Saudi Arabia was that he was the most powerful man in the area; people began calling him a prophet. He had humiliated the Meccans and asserted that Medina is the center for his followers. He became a reformer trying to create an ideal society. He started giving advice and making judgments at the Mosque. His reputation was that he was gentle, open, accepting, non-judgmental, fair, just, incorruptible and gave his possessions to the poor.

Later that year he decided to undermine the power of the Meccans. He united Arab tribes and used marriage as a political tool. Polygamy was widely practiced throughout the tribes. He had another revelation which said that men could have four wives. He, however, could have at least nine. We don't know how many wives or children he actually had but they solidified the peace and his leadership among the tribes of Arabia. One of these political marriages involved Aisha who was betrothed to Mohammad when she was six (typical age was between 9-16). Aisha, when she was young, became lost in a market place and returned to her family with a male friend. The question was whether she had sex with the man or not. This remains a huge debate even today. Should Mohammad have stoned her or given her lashes? (The Quran today says that a woman committing adultery that has four witnesses, shall receive 100 lashes.) Mohammad has a new revelation that says that Aisha was not adulterous. He will marry her and all wives shall wear a veil—called the Principle of Modesty—to cover their nakedness. This principle became common practice 100 years later. Today different cultures and types of interpretation lead to vastly different types of "veiling,"

from simple head covering to entire body covering. Mohammad's revelations in Mecca were considered to be inward principles for faith and the end of days. His revelations in Medina were more practical and functional based on daily life issues.

In 628 Mohammad went on a hajj (pilgrimage) to the Kaaba (this will be explained in detail in Part 3) to pray. The Meccans stopped him. Instead of fighting he went into negotiations:

- He demanded there be no more fighting.
- The Meccans demanded that Mohammad should stop being called a Prophet or messenger of God. He was to be called the son of Abdullah only.
- He could return a year later to complete his hajj.

Ali, his negotiator, refused the demands. Mohammad, however, took a pen, crossed out his title, Prophet, and signed. He did demand that he and the Meccans were to be considered equal. His followers were angry because this wasn't proper male behavior. His behavior was seen as counter cultural (like Jesus). Mohammad had a revelation on his return to Medina—that his behavior was correct. The peaceful way is always the best way. "Whenever an enemy offers you peace, you accept it."

A year later Mohammad returned for his pilgrimage and stayed for three days praying and circling the Kaaba. People saw this as an act of respect and honor to Allah and a sign of trustworthiness for following the agreement.

In 630 the Meccans attacked an ally of Mohammad. He had had enough; he amassed a massive army but offered amnesty and reconciliation instead of vengeance and slaughter. The Meccans surrendered. He offered them an opportunity to submit willingly to Allah or to go away. He did not demand obedience. Mohammad then made Mecca the center of Islam. The Kaaba became a sacred shrine for all of his followers. The tribes of Arabia united under him and he returned to his Mosque in Medina.

In 632 he gave his farewell sermon and declared peace in Arabia. His health was beginning to fail. His sermon was deeply emotional. He summarized what he had accomplished and then gave advice about how to deal with future fears.

- Do no injustice for you will meet Allah on the last day.
- Do not stray from righteousness.
- Foster non-violence.
- Remember obedience is earned, not forced.
- Always follow Allah's message to Abraham, Moses (Torah) and Jesus (Gospels).
- The only reality is that there is one true God.
- No one has superiority over another person.
- All humans are one people who descended from Adam. People formed tribes to get to know one another.
- Listen to Mohammad and pass on his words and understanding.

He concluded by asking the same question three times. "Have I fulfilled my mandate with you?" The people replied three times "yes." (Like his first encounter with Gabriel.) He said to follow his principles and understand that there is no difference between Arabs and non-Arabs.

He became ill and was confined to bed where Aisha nursed him. On June 8, 632 he died in Aisha's house. When he died panic ensued. Abu-Bakr his closest friend calmed the people by saying that Mohammad was a Prophet; he should not be worshipped as a God; there is only one God and his name is Allah. We'll discuss how Islam fractured after his death in a later part.

So, Mohammad died just as all people die. He was buried in Medina, facing Mecca. Why was he followed? Because he was charismatic, gave Allah's truth to humanity and provided Arabs with an identity. He gave the world: (1) Faith in Allah; (2) His life's example; and (3) The Quran.