



# ONE VOICE



Pentecost

Churches: ♦Bethany ♦Immanuel ♦Lunder ♦Silver Lake ♦Winnebago

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## *From the Pastor's Desk*

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."* John 10:10

May is the season of new life. As the sun shines a little longer each day, the power of the sun continues to warm the earth. As we look to the trees as we walk or drive by, we begin to see the bright green of new leaves budding out from the branches. We are already starting to see tractors in the fields, stirring the soil preparing it to receive the new seeds. When the soil is ready, the farmers will be crossing the fields with the planters. We will look each day with great anticipation to be able to row the corn and the beans in the fields. May is also the time gardeners like to plant their spring flowers. The dead brown that has filled the scenery begins to give way to the green leaves, the green rows and then the beautiful colors of the flowers that are planted. We see splashes of bright yellow, red, purple, pink, blue and white flowers around homes and in the gardens. The colors lift our spirits, as no one can paint with such beautiful colors as our Lord.



May is also the time we begin to notice new calves skipping and running in the pastures, full of life. We may be able to see some new lambs walking around with the sheep. If we are really lucky, we can see new colts with their long legs running alongside their mothers.

During the month of May, we also hear the songs of the songbirds early in the morning, calling us to celebrate the life of a new day. We see them flying around and hopping upon the green grass with vibrant colored feathers. Their songs lift our spirits as well.

May is also a time of celebrating life. We celebrate confirmations. Students have studied catechisms, the stories of God's love and salvation written in scriptures, learned some Lutheran Theology like "Grace, "Two Kingdoms", "Vocations", "Theology of the Cross", and more. They stand at the altar confessing their faith of their baptism and congregations celebrate the new adventures of their faith. Then we celebrate and honor Mothers as they bless their families with their love, their faith, their strength, their hard work of mothering and working a vocation as well.

Towards the middle and end of May we celebrate milestones for our seniors in High School and our seniors at college. For our High School Seniors, they have finished the adventures and challenges of High School. A major milestone and a major achievement. When we attend Graduation parties, we often see pictures of their journey and awards of their many achievements in their high school career. For twelve years or better, we have witnessed these students grow and achieve and suddenly they are graduating and ready to move on to the next adventures in their life. Our college graduates have been gone from our communities for a while, but not from our lives. They have studied and met challenges that have sharpened their skills

and added to their talents. Now they are ready to take new adventures into the world, bringing their skills and talents and visions that can change the world.

Jesus said he came that we might have life, life in abundance. Jesus is talking about more than the newness of life we witness each spring. Jesus is talking about abundant life, life filled with joy and love and peace. Jesus' remarks about coming to give us life, life in abundance is surrounded by Jesus declaring He is the Good Shepherd.



Jesus lays out what this means. As the Good Shepherd, he is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. Jesus contrasts the good shepherd with the hired hands, who doesn't care about the sheep, who sees the wolf coming, simply runs away and lets the wolves attack the sheep. Jesus says he is the Good Shepherd, who is willing to lay down his life for the sheep. Jesus did just

that. Jesus laid down his life for us, as Jesus fought the enemies of God, the enemies of sin, death and Satan. As Jesus is jeered by the crowds, calling for his crucifixion, being beaten and mocked by the Temple Police and the Roman Soldiers, being crucified does not look like Jesus is laying down his life. It looks like Jesus' life is being taken from him. But Easter morning, changes the whole story. Jesus, our Resurrected Crucified Lord, tells his disciples once again that it was necessary for God's Messiah to suffer and die. Jesus took on all that sin and Satan and death could throw at him. On Easter morning, Jesus was raised from the dead, defeating the powers of sin, death and Satan.

Now Jesus gives us newness of life. Jesus sets us free from the guilt and the brokenness of our sin. Jesus declares you are forgiven. Jesus declares that you are loved. Jesus declares to you that he makes you an inheritor of the Kingdom of God. Jesus gives you the gift of eternal life, where one day Jesus will lead you to his Heavenly Father's throne and introduce you as a beloved child. Jesus gives you newness of life, as Jesus walks with you through the power of his Holy Spirit, filling your hearts with God's unconditional love. The Holy Spirit gives you the peace of being claimed, even when we continue to make mistakes, continue to sin. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are forgiven and have a fresh start, a newness of life each day. The Holy Spirit empowers us to forgive as we are forgiven, so we can set others free and renew our relationships with one another. Jesus gives us life in the power of his love to forgive you, to claim you, to make things new, to live in the abundance of the blessings of his love day after day.



*Pastor Randy*



# WANDERINGS AND WONDERINGS



*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ... Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ... God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ... We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:7-8, 11-13, 16b, 19)*

**Here's the really important thing we need to understand: When we accept ourselves and all other people as children of God, we reflect the love of Jesus Christ.** That is when we truly become Christ-like when we can accept others as he accepted us.

*Dr. Ken A. Ramsey tells a delightful story about a friend of his named Joel. He says he met Joel while attending seminary at Emory University in Atlanta. Joel was working on his Master of Divinity degree, and they were in the same ministry assessment group. Joel was a big guy. He did his undergraduate work at Dartmouth, where he played football. Their mutual athletic interests were a common bond, and the friendship grew from there. They enjoyed jogging together at a local park.*

*One day they were running around the small lake located there, and Ken noticed that Joel was smiling. "What are you smiling at?" Ken asked.*

*Joel pointed to a little girl fishing with her dad. She was imitating every move the dad made. If he cast, she cast. If he fixed his hat, she fixed hers. If he sat down, she sat down. "Just something about a child imitating her father that makes my heart smile," Joel replied.*

*There was a guy in their ministry assessment group, Ken says, that for some reason, seemed to always be out to get Joel. No matter what Joel*



*said, this guy would contradict him and take pains to point out how shortsighted Joel's comments were. The ministry assessment group was intense and was an environment where they were to evaluate one another in many different areas. This person was continually negative, demeaning and rude to Joel.*

*One day it reached a boiling point, and some really harsh words were exchanged. They left the group and Joel angrily said, "That guy has pushed me too far. He makes me want to run him over like I used to do on the football field!"*

*Remember that Joel was a big guy. "The veins in his thick neck were bulging," says Ken, "and it was enough to even make me shake in my shoes. I would not want to be on the receiving end of anything from him," Ken admits.*

*A few days passed, and it was almost time for another group meeting. The entire group could not wait to see what fireworks might occur between Joel and his enemy.*

*The day before the group meeting, Joel and Ken were jogging in the park together. They were circling the lake, and Ken asked Joel, "So have you decided how you are going to deal with that guy?"*

*"Yes, I sure have," Joel replied.*

*Ken waited for Joel to continue. "I have decided (and then he paused) . . . to forgive him."*

*"Say again?" Ken said.*

*"I have decided to forgive him," Joel stated rather emphatically.*

*Ken smiled.*

*"What are you smiling at?" Joel asked.*

*"There's just something about a child imitating his father that makes my heart smile," Ken said.*

**Forgive others  
as quickly as  
you expect  
God to forgive you.**

**Make God smile ...**

Wanderings and Wonderings,  
Pastor Bill Peters

