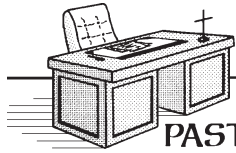


# Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2015



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw.*

As we celebrate our nation's Independence Day this month, what should we think of the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court which allows for supposed "same sex" marriage?

I am not a lawyer, judge, or constitutional scholar, but there are many respected lawyers, judges, and constitutional scholars who strongly disagree with the legal basis for this decision—in particular the four Supreme Court Justices who very strongly dissented against it, including the Chief Justice. It is not unusual for the Supreme Court to eventually reverse or modify previous decisions, such as the infamous "Dred Scott" decision, which legalized slavery in 1857. There will be ongoing legal struggles over this issue, and depending on the future makeup of the Supreme Court—three of the five Justices voting in favor of this decision are over the age of 75—it is possible that this unfortunate ruling may someday be reversed or modified. However, until that time it is the prevailing legal opinion.

On the one hand, the New Testament commands that Christians show the civil government obedience and submission:

*"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. . . Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities" (Romans 13:1-5);*

*"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men" (1 Peter 2:13);*

*"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient" (Titus 3:1).*

On the other hand, however, there is one exception to obeying the authorities: whenever they *command* what God's Word *forbids*, or *forbid* what God's Word *commands*. Then we are forced to disobey, and respond as the Apostles did in the Book of Acts, when they were forbidden to preach about Christ: *"We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29).*



**When the civil government of his day demanded Martin Luther recant his teaching of salvation, by grace alone, through faith alone, based on Scripture alone, he famously declared: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot, I shall not, I will not recant! Here I stand, I can do no other."**

Until recently, I would have never imagined this situation developing here in the United States of America, with our nation's strong Christian heritage, and historic emphasis on what our Bill of Rights calls "the free exercise of religion."

Soon, we will celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of this congregation, by many of our ancestors, including my own great-great grandparents, who settled at Block in 1865. You may not be aware that the early founders of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod debated back in Germany whether to emigrate to America or Australia. Some choose Australia, and so there is a large Lutheran presence there today. But most, including my ancestors and perhaps yours too, chose the United States of America, for a very specific reason: the First Amendment, and its guarantee of "the free exercise of religion."

Germany had a liberal state church, and many of our ancestors were persecuted for their conservative, "old Lutheran" beliefs and practices. The founding president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Dr. C.F.W. Walther, said it was one of the greatest blessings of God in all of human history that this new nation had been founded with the guarantee of "the free exercise of religion" enshrined in its Constitution.

As part of "the free exercise of religion," it has never been the case that churches or their ministers are legally required to host or conduct marriages for everyone who asks—in some cases, not even for members of that very congregation. This recent Supreme Court decision should not affect the longstanding discretion churches and their ministers have to determine whom they will or will not marry.

However, a new article was recently added to our congregation's Constitution stating this explicitly: *"No property of any*

kind of this congregation, including but not limited to the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and church grounds, shall be used for any activity which conflicts with the confessional standard set forth in Article III of this Constitution, including but not limited to weddings, funerals, and other religious services, and receptions, celebrations, and other events, both religious and non-religious. Determination of eligibility shall rest with the Board of Elders, in consultation with the Pastor." You can be assured that this is the policy of our congregation, from which, by God's Grace, we shall never waver.

But, it seems the time is coming—perhaps not within my lifetime, but probably within the lifetimes of my children—when the government, in violation of its own First Amendment, will try to force Bible-believing churches such as ours, through legal action, fines, and revoking of tax-exempt status, to abandon the Bible's teachings on issues such as marriage and human sexuality.

In the Book of Acts, after the Apostles were released from being imprisoned and savagely beaten because they preached Christ, it says something truly amazing: "they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:4). It seems the time is coming when Bible-believing Christians even in the United States of America will be "considered worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus."

## Trinity Tribune

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On the one hand, we must always do everything we can to submit to the governing authorities, right up to the line of violating God's Word. But, we must not cross that line. Once the government begins *commanding* what God's Word forbids, or *forbidding* what God's Word commands, God grant that we and our descendants after us, in this congregation, and the entire Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and other Bible-believing churches, will remain faithful in an unfaithful world.

When Martin Luther appeared before the Emperor in 1521, he tried everything possible to submit to and comply with the civil government of his day. But, finally the unyielding demand was made that he recant his teaching of salvation, by grace alone, through faith alone, based on Scripture alone. In his famous reply, we could substitute "Supreme Court" for "pope" and "councils":

*"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Holy Scripture or by clear reason—for I do not trust in the pope nor councils alone, since it is evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves—I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. It is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. I cannot, I shall not, I will not recant! Here I stand, I can do no other. So help me God. Amen."*

God grant that when we or our descendants are faced with our own "Martin Luther moment," coerced by the government to abandon the teachings of the Bible, as true Lutherans we will stand firm like Luther, declaring with the Apostles, "We must obey God rather than men!" and rejoicing that we are "considered worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus."

As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Pastor Kevin Vogts

## July Sermon Topics



Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our congregation's web site, [www.trinitylcms.org/sermons](http://www.trinitylcms.org/sermons).

July 5

"God Bless America"  
1 Timothy 2:1-4

July 12

"The Forgiveness of Sins"  
Ephesians 1:7

July 19

"A Special Invitation"  
Mark 6:31

July 26

"St. Paul's Source of Strength"  
2 Corinthians 4:8-9



July 5 ..... Olivia Mitchell  
July 12 ..... Evan Kettler  
July 19 ..... Karlie McMullin  
July 26 ..... Luke Elkinton



## Adult Bible Class "These Are a Few of Our Favorite Hymns"

Our current study in Adult Bible Class is *These Are a Few of Our Favorite Hymns*, looking at the background and meaning of—and singing!—beloved hymns. Join in Sundays at 9:00am in the Overflow to get a deeper appreciation for your favorite hymns!

# Youth Bible Study



All youth are invited to join in each week our Youth Bible Study, led by our Youth Director, Janette Reinke, during the Sunday School hour from 9:00am-10:00am in the Youth Room (upstairs behind the Choir Loft).

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at [blocktlc@midwest-connections.com](mailto:blocktlc@midwest-connections.com).

- July 1 ..... Emily Prothe
- July 3 ..... Brandy Allen
- July 3 ..... Molly Hermann
- July 3 ..... Karen Windler
- July 5 ..... Joshua Bunch
- July 5 ..... Samantha Prothe
- July 6 ..... Ryan Morton
- July 7 ..... Regan Boyer
- July 7 ..... Shelly D'Amato
- July 7 ..... Kennedy McMullin
- July 7 ..... Tamara Mitchell
- July 10 ..... Wanda Stagg
- July 11 ..... Ken Debrick
- July 11 ..... Darlene Heater
- July 11 ..... Dennis Prothe
- July 12 ..... Joshua Sombke
- July 12 ..... Steve Warner
- July 13 ..... Steve Grother
- July 13 ..... Duane Prothe
- July 13 ..... Don Warring
- July 14 ..... Sheryl Holtz
- July 14 ..... Rayden Berry
- July 15 ..... Karen Kaiser
- July 16 ..... David Johns
- July 16 ..... Debbie Oberheide
- July 16 ..... Brittannie Ritch
- July 17 ..... Ann Davis
- July 18 ..... Keith Prothe
- July 18 ..... Madison Snider
- July 19 ..... Clint Kettler



**Trinity Lutheran Youth enjoyed a BBQ & both regular and water balloon volleyball on July 5 (you can just see the balloon in the air in the photo below). The event closed with taking down the cemetery flags as a service project. More photos are in the Picture Gallery on our church web site, [www.trinitylcms.org/photos](http://www.trinitylcms.org/photos).**



- July 19 ..... Cathy Tesar
- July 20 ..... Mallory Tharp
- July 20 ..... Norma Peckman
- July 21 ..... Dan Hieber
- July 21 ..... Chance Mueller
- July 23 ..... Lillian Kettler
- July 23 ..... Taryn Jones

- July 24 ..... Zachary Davis
- July 24 ..... Darrell Peckman
- July 24 ..... Margo Rodewald
- July 24 ..... Marcie Reyelts
- July 25 ..... Shannon Fanning
- July 26 ..... Stephanie Bivins
- July 27 ..... Matthew Barnett

- July 27 ..... Denna Jones
- July 27 ..... Curtis Kettler
- July 27 ..... Marla Prothe
- July 29 ..... Lonnie England
- July 29 ..... Barbara Herrs
- July 29 ..... Cody Weaver
- July 31 ..... Barbie Dillenbeck
- July 31 ..... Colleen Richardson
- July 1 ..... Dannie & Elaine Stewart (43)
- July 7 ..... Andrew & Brianna Chapman (3)
- July 8 ..... Earl & Darleen Medlin (40)
- July 9 ..... Louie & Guylene Klein (27)
- July 15 ..... Adam & Lorri Jenson (20)
- July 18 ..... Paul & Karen Brack (34)
- July 18 ..... Jim & Joyce Johns (34)
- July 22 ..... Charles & Kathy Hall (37)
- July 26 ..... John & Kathy Gerken (46)
- July 26 ..... David & Carol Wray (35)
- July 27 .... Phillip & Morgan Richards (13)
- July 29 ..... Chris & Sherri Webb (26)



**Progress on the new Trinity Lutheran Shelter House on the site of the former school building is seen through the avenue of flags displayed in the cemetery for the Fourth of July. Dedication of the Shelter House is planned to be conducted, Lord willing, at the Blocktoberfest Outdoor Service, which will be the first outdoor service held in the Shelter House, on the morning of Sunday, September 20 at 10:00am.**



*H2O!* God Keeps His Promise is the theme for our Summer Sunday School during June, July, and August. In addition to Bible stories and singing the children will enjoy making fun crafts. Bring your children this summer on Sundays at 9:00am for *H2O!* God Keeps His Promise.



Could you—individual, family, or group—serve snacks sometime after worship? Consider signing up for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries. There is a sign-up sheet on the table with the snacks. Our Generations group has generously agreed to provide and prepare the coffee and juice each week, so those signing up are only asked to provide some treat. Thank you to all those providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

- July 5  
Kyle Minden
- July 12  
Garrison/Rausch
- July 19  
Vogts
- July 26  
Wood

- July 12  
Rev. Andrew & Kelsey Schlund  
Mexico
- July 19  
Rev. Matthew & Heather Ruesch  
Puerto Rico
- July 26  
Rev. Thomas & Mary Aadland  
Kenya



Our congregation helps support these missionaries through our mission contributions. Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world supported in this way by our congregation.

- July 5  
Kristin Lange  
Germany

## **Guest Pastor August 2**

Pastor and Terry Vogts will be attending a concert in which their daughter Sarah will be performing at the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, North Carolina the first weekend of August, and they will be gone from July 27 thru August 4.

Our guestminister on Sunday, August 2 will be Rev. Roger Schepmann. You may also contact Rev. Schepmann (913-764-4859) for pastoral needs while Pastor Vogts is away, or you may call Pastor Vogts on his cell phone (913-594-9865) or at the parsonage (913-849-3711), which will be forwarded to his cell phone, and he will arrange for pastoral care.