

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

February
2017



Was Abraham Lincoln a Christian?

It is commonly asserted that Abraham Lincoln was not a Christian. However, there is actually quite a bit of evidence to indicate he did indeed have personal faith in Christ.

The main reason for doubting Lincoln's Christian faith is that he was never baptized or formally joined a Christian church. However, this may have been due to experiences he had as a child. His parents belonged to a very strict, fundamentalist Baptist church, similar to the Amish. Those being baptized into this church were required to go well beyond making a Christian profession of faith. They also had to pledge lifelong submission to all the other legalistic requirements of the sect.

It seems that when the time came for Lincoln as a young man to make a decision about being baptized, as a great lover of freedom he could not submit to these oppressive restrictions. Perhaps this distorted view of Christian Baptism, and what joining a church entailed, stuck with Lincoln throughout his life, and always made him hesitant to be baptized or formally join a church.

However, we should recall the example of the thief on the cross, which shows it is possible to have saving faith in Christ apart from Baptism (Luke 23:39-43). And Jesus declared, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Thus, although Baptism is indeed normally expected of Christian believers, ultimately it is not lack of Baptism but lack of faith that condemns, and saving faith can exist apart from Baptism.



It is the duty of nations as well as of people to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God ... and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord!

Abraham Lincoln
Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1863

In 1956 a book owned by Lincoln was rediscovered and authenticated as genuine by Lincoln scholars. It is one of very few books in which Lincoln noted his ownership in his own hand, inscribing "A. Lincoln" on the inside cover. Published in 1852, it is not known how or when Lincoln came into possession of this little book, a compilation of Scripture passages arranged for devotional purposes, with a perhaps revealing title: *The Believer's Daily Treasure: Texts of Scripture Arranged for Every Day of the Year*.

This book may actually be what his close friend and political ally Newton Batemen described as a "pocket New Testament," which he reported Lincoln pulled from his vest in 1860 to prove that he "carefully read the Bible," and the "pocket edition of the New Testament" which John Hay, Lincoln's private secretary and later Secretary of State, said he often saw Lincoln reading.

Congressman John B. Alley said that Lincoln "reflected a great deal upon religious subjects." When challenged in 1846 by a political rival to admit that he was an "infidel," Lincoln shot back in reply, "That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

Joshua Speed was Lincoln's closest, dearest friend. They met in the 1830's in Springfield, Illinois, where Speed owned a general store and Lincoln was a budding lawyer. Lincoln sublet a room in Speed's apartment above the store, and they became not only roommates but also best friends for the rest of their lives. Speed wrote that "when I first knew Mr. Lincoln he was skeptical as to the great truths of the Christian religion. . . [but] after he was elected President, he sought to become a believer—and to make the Bible a preceptor to his faith and a guide of his conduct."

Leonard Swett, Lincoln's law partner, concluded that the heavier Lincoln's presidential responsibilities weighed on him, the more Lincoln tried to understand those responsibilities from a religious perspective. "As he became involved in matters of the gravest importance, full of great responsibility . . . a feeling of religious reverence, and belief in God . . . increased upon him."

Many other close associates of Lincoln also insisted that he had undergone a genuine religious rebirth. And indeed, as President he took every opportunity to publicly appeal to God or Christianity as a source of inspiration or direction. His farewell address to the people of Springfield as he departed for the inauguration in 1861 was unprepared and unrehearsed, spoken from the heart on the spur of the moment. In it Lincoln declared, "I cannot succeed . . . without the assistance of the Divine Being."

In his first inaugural address, Lincoln appealed to "Christianity and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land" as the best way to avoid civil war. During the war, Lincoln established the modern military chaplaincy, over the protests of those who thought it violated separation of church and state; invited religious organizations to meet with him in the White House, and authorized their use of

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Published Monthly by

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February, 2017*

government buildings in Washington for worship services and other activities; and in 1864 he came close to endorsing a proposal to amend the preamble to the Constitution to include an explicit reference to God.

In his Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863, Lincoln declared: "It is the duty of nations as well as of people to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God . . . and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord!" In 1865, Lincoln's second inaugural address was practically a sermon, a deep theological meditation on the purposes of God in the war.

As far as personal faith, Lincoln's close friend and political ally Newton Batemen reported that Lincoln confessed to him in 1860 that he believed that "Christ is God." Charles Maltby, another lifelong friend of Lincoln, said that Lincoln "held in reverence the Christian religion."

One astonishing episode from Lincoln's presidency probably says it all. During the Civil War, Lincoln's cabinet was debating a proposal to issue new paper currency, because the Union had nearly used up its reserves of silver and gold. Because most people at the time preferred coinage and were skeptical of paper money, an idea came up during the cabinet meeting that the new currency should carry a Bible verse to inspire confidence.

Lincoln was against this proposal to issue new paper money in the first place, and he sat listening quietly but with growing impatience as the cabinet debated a number of proposed Bible verses to print on it. Finally, the President spoke up. Without having consulted a Bible, he announced, "Gentlemen, may I suggest the Acts of the Apostles, the third chapter, the sixth verse." With that, he got up and left the room.

The rest of the cabinet located a Bible, and were dumbfounded to find it was these words, which St. Peter spoke to a beggar before healing him, that Lincoln apparently knew from memory and had ironically suggested should be

printed on their new paper currency: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee."

Lincoln was obviously extremely well-versed in Christian Scripture, and throughout his life, but especially after he became President, he showed a strong tug toward the Protestant faith in which he was born and raised. Based on Jesus' declaration that "whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40), the rule of thumb is that those who wish they were Christian believers actually already are, because otherwise they would feel no such attraction. Abraham Lincoln was such a sincere seeker, who said he "often wished that I was a more devout man than I am."

Pastor Kevin Vogts

Sweetheart Dinner February 11



Beat the winter blahs with a fun Italian themed Sweetheart Dinner put on by the Trinity Youth on Saturday, February 11. Drinks and appetizers will start at 5:30pm.

The cost is \$20 per person, \$40 per couple. Singles are also invited to join the fun! Proceeds will be used to help fund Trinity Youth activities and to attend the 2019 LCMS National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis.

Babysitting offered at no additional charge! Kid-friendly food will be served along with games, movies and entertainment.

Your choice of beef stuffed shells with creamy bolognese sauce, or parmesan crusted chicken over pasta; green beans or broccoli; cheesecake or decadent brownie with ice cream; all served with bread, dipping oil, salad and delicious appetizers.

Youth will be available after worship services to take reservations, or you may text 913-461-3399 or email susankhenry@yahoo.com to make your reservation.

Building for the Future

Building Project Approved

At the quarterly meeting on January 22 the Voters Assembly approved our proposed building project. The Building Committee will be meeting with the architects this month to begin the process and develop a project timeline. It is not yet known when construction will begin. The goal is to have it completed by (and hopefully earlier than) Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018.

Brochures explaining the project, with full plans of the proposal, and pledge cards are still available in the Overflow. These materials and a Youtube video of a Powerpoint presentation about the project are also online at www.trinitylcms.org/building. It is still possible to pledge to the project or to increase your pledge. Simply put your completed pledge card in the box in the Overflow, or mail to the church, or given to chairman Greg Windler. You may also contact Greg if you have any questions about this undertaking.

Thank you to all who pledged so generously for this project, and please pray for the Lord's blessing upon this exciting endeavor!



As has become customary, we are again having extra services of Holy Communion from October thru

March, on both the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. This provides an extra opportunity to receive the Sacrament for those who may not be able to attend worship on the first Sunday of the month due to inclement weather during the more stormy fall and winter months.



Lutheran High Handbells February 12

On Sunday, February 12, the Resounding Joy handbell choir from Lutheran High School of Kansas City will be performing as part of our worship service.

Anna Vogts is a member of this group and it is traditional for them to perform in the home congregations of choir members during their senior year. Pastor Vogts' sister, Paula Meier, is on the faculty of LHS and is director of the group.

A freewill door offering will be taken following the service to support the LHS music program.



Sign Up for Snacks in 2017

Could you—individual, family, or group—serve snacks sometime after worship during 2017? 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. Consider signing up for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries.

Thanks to all those providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

February 5
Gladys & Sharon Prothe

February 12
Phylis Trickett

February 19 & 26
Need Volunteers



Lent Begins March 1

Our special Lenten Vespers services will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 1, at 7:00pm and continue each Wednesday throughout the Lenten season.

The theme for this year's Lenten services is *A Lenten Look at Psalm 23*, focusing on the meaning for us of this beloved psalm. "Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus . . . who endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2).



February 5
"Let Your Light So Shine"
Matthew 5:16

February 12
*"What God Has Prepared
for Those Who Love Him"*
1 Corinthians 2:9-10

February 19
"The Faithful Steward"
1 Corinthians 4:1-2

February 26
"The Inspiration of Scripture"
2 Peter 1:20-21



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 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

- February 2 Ashtin Armstrong
- February 4 Jodie Wood
- February 4 Leslie Vohs
- February 6 Kerry Brandt
- February 6 Tanna Jones
- February 6 Glenn Minden
- February 7 Stacey Elkinton
- February 7 Tyler Allen
- February 8 Karen Ohlmeier
- February 9 Daniel Wendte
- February 10 Darrell Brandt
- February 10 Terry Bunch
- February 10 Kathy Gerken
- February 10 Leonard Oberheide
- February 11 Hannah Raines
- February 12 James Haley
- February 13 Valerie Gerken
- February 13 Logan Hendrickson
- February 18 Joey Stephens
- February 18 Stan Windler
- February 19 Debbie Windler
- February 20 Judy Kutz
- February 20 Angie Fickel
- February 20 Carolyn Warner



2017 Lent Services Wednesdays, 7:00pm

March 1 – Ash Wednesday

*"The Lord Is
My Shepherd"*

March 8 – Lent Service II

"I Shall Not Want"

March 15 – Lent Service III

*Rev. Roger Schepmann
Guest Minister*

March 22 – Lent Service IV

*"He Restoreth
My Soul"*

March 29 – Lent Service V

*"He Leadeth Me in the
Paths of Righteousness"*

April 5 – Lent Service VI

*"Thy Rod and Thy Staff
They Comfort Me"*

April 13 – Maundy Thursday

*"Thou Preparest a
Table Before Me"*

April 14 – Good Friday

*"And I Will Dwell in the
House of the Lord Forever"*

- February 21 Jeff Davis
- February 21 Marty Stutzman
- February 25 Michelle Haley
- February 25 Curtis Hall
- February 25 Duane Rodewald
- February 26 Glenn Block
- February 26 Cate Minden
- February 27 Matthew Kriesel
- February 27 Reita Woodall

- February 28 Slina Prothe
- February 29 Austin Henry
- Feb 10 Curtis & Kristie Weaver (21)
- Feb 11 ... Lloyd & Karen Ohlmeier (55)
- Feb 13 Jeff & Windy Davis (24)
- Feb 15 Curtis & Jamie Hall (14)
- Feb 19 Michael & Katie Taylor (12)
- Feb 21 Ron & Marcia Raines (28)
- Feb 22 Kevin & Denise Debrick (25)



New Bible Class

Our new study in Adult Bible Class is *The Lessons of the Lord*. In this study we are looking at the weekly Scripture readings used in our worship, including how this system developed, how the readings are selected, and a study of that Sunday's readings.

Everyone is invited to "start the New Year right" by joining in Adult Bible Class on Sundays at 9:00am in the Overflow to learn more about *The Lessons of the Lord* and how these selections from God's Word can bless you on your weekly walk with God!



Nursing Home Services February 12

You are invited to help Trinity provide brief worship services for nursing home residents at North Point and Medical Lodge on February 12. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length at each home. We begin at 1:30pm at Country Club Estates and then go to Vintage Park for the second service.

The residents really enjoy these services, especially singing their favorite hymns. It's great to have church members there to greet the residents and sing along. We have a faithful few members who help but we could use your help too!

Our other nursing home services scheduled for 2017 are:

- ✘ March 12—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park

- ✘ April 9—North Point and Medical Lodge
- ✘ May 14—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park
- ✘ June 11—North Point and Medical Lodge
- ✘ July 2—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park
- ✘ August 6—North Point and Medical Lodge
- ✘ September 3—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park
- ✘ October 1—North Point and Medical Lodge
- ✘ October 29—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park
- ✘ November 26—Country Club Estates and Vintage Park



150th Church Anniversary Committee Volunteers

Trinity was founded in 1868, so we will be celebrating Trinity's 150th Anniversary in 2018. It's time to start planning! If you are willing to serve on the 150th Anniversary Committee please let congregational chairman Greg Windler know (913-285-0164; gjohnwindler@gmail.com).



Due to a recent change in the church's internet service provider the old church email address [blocktlc@midwest-connections.com] is no longer active and emails sent to that address will not be received.

Please make a note of the church's new email address and update your contact information, trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.



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 who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

February 5

*Rev. Dale & Suzanne Kaster
Ghana*

February 12

*Rev. P.A. Richard-Wokoma
Nigeria*

February 19

*Britt Odemba
Kenya*

February 26

*Mark & Megan Mantey
Uganda*

After Nearly 500 Years Lutherans Again Proclaiming the Faith in Spain

Just 42 years after Martin Luther ignited the Reformation in 1517 with the blow of his hammer, dozens of Lutherans were martyred by being burned at the stake, in the Plaza Mayor at Valladolid, in Seville, and other cities in Spain. They died confessing the pure Gospel of Christ as the only Savior from sin, death, and the devil. These faithful souls were victims of the Spanish Inquisition, which succeeded in snuffing out all traces of Luther's "heretical" teachings in Spain for nearly 500 years.

Today, as the world marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, 77 Lutherans shepherded by two LCMS missionaries are once again boldly confessing the Gospel in Spain. Two LCMS missionary pastors, Rev. Adam Lehman and Rev. David Warner, were recently assigned by the Synod to serve in Spain, working in partnership with a Spanish-speaking sister Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina.

Lehman and Warner labor in the long shadows cast by the ever-present Roman Catholic state-sponsored, official church—with its enormous gilded cathedrals featuring high altars and statues of saints, where prayers to and for the dead are regularly spoken and Mary, not Jesus, is the center of faith. As Lehman explains, "The Roman Catholic Church affects everything, it's so ingrained in society that it's a big leap [for Spaniards] to leave the church they were born into." However, weakened in an increasingly secular culture, these grand sanctuaries are more likely to be filled with tourists armed with cameras and selfie sticks than worshippers.

In this country of almost 50 million where 70% of the population claims to be Roman Catholic, most are so in name only. As Warner sips a coffee at an outdoor café in Seville, where steeples and religious symbolism are present all around, he says, "It's almost



Rev. David Warner conducts a service for the only Lutheran family in Valladolid, Spain. In addition to building up the Lutheran Church in three key Spanish cities, he and Rev. Adam Lehman also serve as "circuit rider" pastors for such scattered Lutherans.

Both former Marines who entered the pastoral ministry as a second career, LCMS missionaries Rev. David Warner and Rev. Adam Lehman share a light-hearted moment on a train ride following a long day of travel and worship in Spain.



otherworldly to have so much appearance of Christianity but so little real Christian life, but that's normal here."

Both former Marines who entered the pastoral ministry as a second career, Lehman and Warner are strategically staking a claim for the Gospel in three key cities, Madrid, Seville, and Cartagena. In each of these cities is a core group of faithful Lutherans who gather for worship in rented facilities—a hotel meeting room, an Episcopal church, even a former discotheque! These locations serve as the main stake from which the faithful Spanish Lutherans will reach out with Christ and His saving Word in this historic and beautiful land.

Lehman and Warner also serve as nationwide "circuit riders," regularly bringing Christ's Word and Sacraments to the Lutheran faithful who are scattered across the country. One such stop is with the only Lutheran family in the ancient city of Valladolid—where the last Lutherans to live there, 16 of them, were convicted as heretics and burned at the stake in the town square in 1559.

The missionaries are greeted with hugs and kisses and loud words of welcome as they enter the apartment home of Jose Antonio, his wife, Sandra, and their son, Juan Jose. The parents are doctors and natives of Columbia. The family has eagerly waited for this visit from their pastors. But this is not a social call. The Church has come to these souls, who are hungry for the bread of life. Warner unpacks his portable Communion set and prepares a makeshift altar on the family's dining room table. On his iPad is the Concordia Organist app, which provides musical accompaniment for the little flock as they joyously sing together the liturgy and hymns in their Divine Service.

Jose's voice cracks as he describes what such visitations mean to him: "There is no Lutheran community here, so it is very good for us that the Lutheran Church is beginning here. It's not easy to be three Lutherans here alone." When asked to explain why he is a Lutheran, 14-year-old Juan Jose says, "Because I believe in what's in the Bible—for me the idea is that Jesus came, He saved us. I am Lutheran because I believe in what God said."