

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2019



This month's article is condensed and adapted from an article by Rev. David Cloud, published on September 26, 2019 by the Baptist Information Service.

Renouncing "Jumboism"

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Baptism Information Service
September 26, 2019*

If pastors want to pursue a stronger biblical course for their churches, they must stop measuring by numbers, whether membership, or attendance, or special events, or offerings. Such a test isn't found in Scripture. It is a man-made invention, and the fruit has been terrible. In truth, numbers mean nothing in relation to the true spiritual condition of a church, and to focus on numbers can only puff up or discourage.

In modern times, the numbers philosophy was invented in the 1920's by the pastors of several large American congregations, who were competing to outdo each other. This idolatry of numbers came to be called "jumboism," with a constant emphasis on numbers, a constant reporting of numbers, a constant boasting about numbers. The philosophy of "jumboism" was adopted by a great many churches and their famous pastors. It seemed to be summarized by "get as many as you can, as fast as you can."

For example, huge membership numbers got Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee listed as the world's largest church as recently as 1982. But, what did it mean? The church no longer even exists! Though once supposedly the largest church in the world, it didn't survive one generation beyond the pastor who built it all up—centered around him—with his idolatrous philosophy of "jumboism."

By the test of numbers, the church at Laodicea had "prospered and grown" and seemed preeminent over the "weak" church at Philadelphia that was "not very strong" (Revelation 3:8, 17). But, we know that this was not true in Christ's eyes! For, He commends the little church at Philadelphia, "You have kept My Word and have not denied My name," while He denounces the big, prosperous church at Laodicea, "You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."

This idolatry of numbers came to be called jumboism," with a constant emphasis on numbers, a constant reporting of numbers, a constant boasting about numbers.

The pastors in the early churches are never introduced as "great," and the churches are never called "great," "biggest," "fastest growing," or "most exciting." That is not New Testament language; it is the language of the world. To seek to be the biggest and the greatest is not having that lowliness of mind, patterned after Christ Himself, whereby each esteems others better than themselves (Philippians 2:3). It is not being clothed with Christian humility (1 Peter 5:5).

A small church that is striving to be a pure batch of dough for Christ, unleavened by false doctrine (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), is far more pleasing to God, and has far more true spiritual potential, than a larger church leavened with "hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Let me hasten to say that we don't have a goal to make churches small! The goal is to make churches faithful to God's Word. And such a church will grow, because God's pure Word produces fruit.

When it comes to numbers, God's thoughts are not our thoughts. When Gideon had an impressive army of 32,000, God said, "Too many." When 22,000 went home, God still said, "Too many." For His own purposes, He cut Gideon's army down to 300. God doesn't want man to get any glory for what He does (Judges 7:2). When David counted his people to ascertain his greatness, God was far from pleased (2 Samuel 24:1-17).

In God's eyes, there are no "great" men, only faithful or unfaithful ones. The same is true for churches. Jesus taught that when we have done everything that God has commanded, we should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty" (Luke 17:10).

The preacher who takes the Bible seriously in these days, and sets out to lead a church that is striving to be a pure batch of dough for Christ, unleavened by false doctrine (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), will probably lose people, at least in the short term. It's almost guaranteed, as St. Paul warned Pastor Timothy:

"I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Timothy 4:1-3).

Like the seed scattered along the path, or in rocky places, or among the thorns, "jumboism" produces only false growth. Such churches may indeed spring up quickly and seem very impressive—at first. For, like the largest church in the world in 1982 that no longer even exists, churches that grow by means of human wisdom and false teachings will wither, because they have no root in the unadulterated, life-giving doctrines of God's Word (Matthew 13:5-6).

Let me hasten to say that we *don't* have a goal to make churches small! The goal is to make churches faithful to God's Word. And such a church has power with God. It *will* grow, because God's pure Word produces fruit (John 15:5-8). But, it will grow properly, according to God's will, and in God's way and God's time, not by human methodology and pragmatism. As St. Paul declared to the congregation at Corinth, which was infected with the idolatrous spirit of "jumboism":

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"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. . . By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:5-11).



Could you—individual, family, or group—serve snacks sometime after worship? *The last three Sundays of November remain open!* 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. Thanks to all those providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

November 3
Meyers

November 10, 17, 24
Need Volunteers



Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons; as podcasts in the iTunes store by searching for "Rev. Kevin Vogts"; and printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are available in the Gathering Room.

November 3 (All Saints' Sunday)
"Blessed Are Those Who Mourn"
Matthew 5:4

November 10
"God Has Come to Help His People"
Luke 7:11-17

November 17
"The Kingdom of God is Within You"
Luke 17:20-21

November 24
"My Words Will Never Pass Away"
Luke 21:33

November 28 (Thanksgiving Day)
"An Attitude of Gratitude"
Philippians 4:6



During November we will complete our current study in Adult Bible Class on *Bible 101: An Introduction to Understanding the Bible*.

How do we find the real meaning for those parts of the Bible that seem mysterious or hard to understand? Why are there so many different versions of the Bible? Which translation is best? Which one should I use?

Join in Sundays at 9:00am during November in the Heritage Room!

Nursing Home Services



You are invited to help Trinity provide brief worship services for nursing home residents at Country Club Estates and Vintage Park on Sunday, November 3. 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.



November Birthdays & Anniversaries

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not be 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.

- November 1 Christopher England
- November 2 Steve Debrick
- November 4 Peyton Mitchell
- November 5 Sara Prothe
- November 6 Jill Druse
- November 7 Fritz Meyer
- November 8 Erin England
- November 8 Leonard Windler
- November 9 Greg Windler
- November 9 Brad Ashley
- November 11 Lana Kettler
- November 11 Chylar Jones
- November 13 Dennis Ohlmeier
- November 13 Doris Rodewald
- November 14 Elena Smithhisler
- November 15 Frances Minter
- November 15 JoAnn Vaughn
- November 16 Sacred Davis
- November 19 Elaine Broucker
- November 19 Kreston Debrick
- November 19 Kathy Peckman
- November 20 Alexis Belsanti
- November 20 Luke Elkinton
- November 20 Randy Maisch
- November 21 Jim Prothe
- November 21 Megan Tesar
- November 22 Whitney Shoemaker
- November 22 Burl Peckman
- November 22 Jason Peterson
- November 24 Lindsey Lester
- November 25 Carolyn Isenhower
- November 25 Courtney Belsanti
- November 25 Dana Hall
- November 26 Liliana Peckman
- November 28 Hunter Rush
- November 29 Rick Druse
- November 30 Alan Hutchison
- Nov 3 Ken & Karla Debrick (34)
- Nov 18 Darrell & Barb Brandt (49)
- Nov 20 Harry & Gay Stubbs (45)
- Nov 22 Brad & Susan Ashley (16)
- Nov 23 Vernon & Donna Prothe (66)
- Nov 29 Webb & Virginia Oberheide (35)
- Nov 29 Brett & Becky Stutzman (52)



Thanksgiving Day Service

Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate Thanksgiving at Trinity, Thursday, November 28, 10:00am

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

O Give Thanks unto the LORD, for He is Good



New Cemetery Map

Building on the research and work of the previous map that hung in the former nursery, a new map has been created for our cemetery, with accompanying indexes sorted by name, year, and location. Photos of the graves on the new map are mostly from the web site www.findagrave.com.

The map and indexes are on the table in the vestibule by the front door (near bell rope). Please help check this work and if you find errors or missing information report it to Pastor Vogts. Because it involves so many names, dates, and other data, it is anticipated there may be mistakes and typos and a second printing with corrections will likely be needed. Thanks to those who have reported corrections so far!

This map, or a corrected reprint, will eventually be hung on the wall at that location, since it is conveniently located adjacent to the cemetery. We are also planning to get some kind of markers at the end of each row in the cemetery identifying them as "A, B, C," etc. to aid in locating graves.

Holy Days and Holidays

New Bible Study in December

Soon we begin another round of the traditional holiday season. But, how did our holidays get started? What do they all really *mean*?

On December 1 we will begin a new study in Adult Bible Class on *Holy Days and Holidays*. We'll look at the background of the holidays we celebrate, and what, if any, Biblical basis and Christian significance they have.

You may be surprised how many of the holidays that we now consider "secular" actually started as Christian holy days—even Groundhog Day and Halloween!

Come join in on Sunday mornings at 9:00am in the Heritage Room beginning December 1 for a fascinating look at *Holy Days and Holidays!*

MISSION NEWS

Outreach in Leipzig to Atheists and Refugees

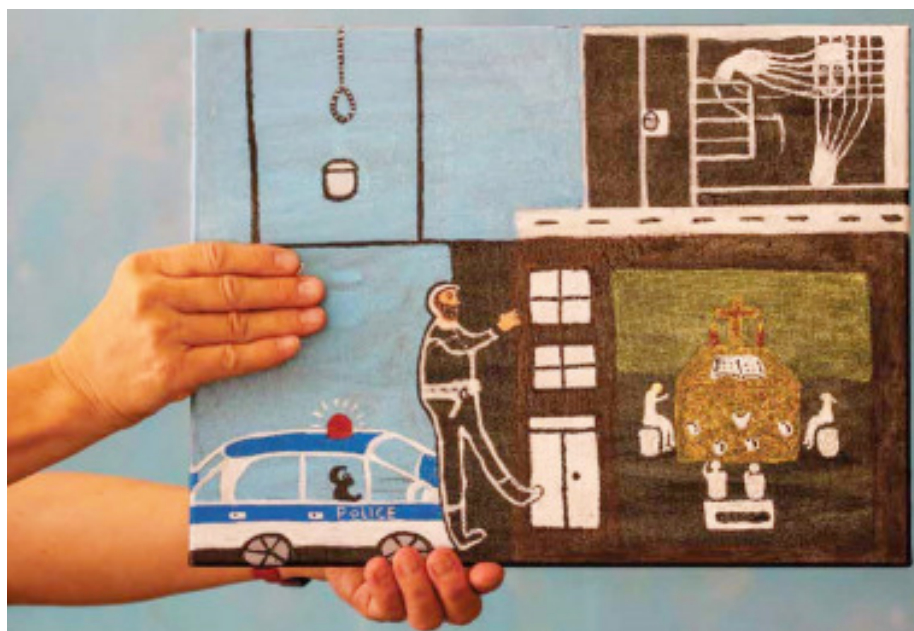
The Bridge Lutheran Outreach Center in Leipzig, Germany—known as “Die Brücke” in German—offers Bible classes, crafts and other activities, through which missionaries help refugees learn German, and teach mostly German children the Bible.

“Even though they say they are atheists, they come back every week and they are hearing the Word of God,” says Lutheran Church Missouri Synod missionary Deaconess Kim Bueltmann. “The Bridge is a staple in the community. When the doors are open . . . they know that they can come in and have coffee with us.” LCMS missionary Deirdre Christiansen sees “the Pentecost effect—they are hearing the Word of God in their own language. You see the joy they feel when they receive the Word of God.”

“If you have experienced the love of Christ, why would you want anything else?” said a refugee from Iran, a young lady who must remain anonymous to protect her family. She loves Jesus and rejoices that He loves her. She paints to express her faith and process her pain. One painting contains frightening images: a police officer spying on a house church, a prison cell and hangman’s noose.

The refugees describe meeting in house churches underground. Military officials often showed up disguised as interested Christians. But, when they learned the names of the people, they arrested many. In prison, the Christians were severely mistreated. Many were hanged or “released” to be killed on the streets.

One refugee shared a story about his brother, who was arrested, incarcerated, released, and then found



An LCMS missionary holds a painting by a young Iranian refugee who now attends Die Brücke (The Bridge) Lutheran Outreach Center in Leipzig, Germany, showing frightening images of the persecution she and other Christians experience in Iran.

mutilated. In another story, the pastor of the house church was arrested, and the members were told that their names were now known and they must flee the country. A young girl described how men assaulted her repeatedly and left her in the wilderness. As she sat with her mother, tears and fear covered her face.

The refugees tell stories of terror and unbelievable cruelty. Yet they insist that the *people* of Iran are not bad, but it is the Muslim regime that is cruel and has ruined their country. Islam is forced upon the citizens, with the choice of belief or death.

A young woman related that after learning Islam, she decided she would rather have no religion at all than the God of the Quran. Her cousin told her about Christianity and invited her to church. She said the people there were different, that Jesus taught forgiveness, and that changes everything.

To gain their freedom, the refugees journeyed through Turkey, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy and other places until they arrived in Germany. One related the story of a shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea, when 35 people were saved from the cold waters. Some walked and hid in forests and sewers to avoid being found by Muslims hunting down Christian refugees fleeing the Middle East.

Germany offers refugee status and assistance to those fleeing Iran and other places. And in the cities of Leipzig, Dresden, and Chemnitz, the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK), a partner church of the LCMS, works with refugees to teach them the faith and help them adjust to life in Germany.



Worshippers receive Communion from missionary Rev. Hugo Gevers at St. Lukaskirche in Leipzig. After falling into disrepair during the atheistic East German years, it has recently been restored and is used for services by LCMS affiliated missionaries reaching out to both Middle East refugees and atheistic Germans.

Baptism classes attract many refugees, since it is an activity the German government approves for refugee status. Many of the refugees, even the Christians, are not baptized. In Chemnitz, more than 30 refugees gathered one day to hear about the Lord's gift of Baptism. Rev. Stefan Dittmer, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Dresden, taught about sin, guilt, and God's love in Christ. He explained that God's love is for the whole world in Christ, and that in Baptism it is for you personally, for each refugee.

"There are really very few churches who are doing mission work among the migrants," said SELK missionary Rev. Hugo Gevers. "This is an atheist region of the former East Germany, so even many Germans do not believe in Christ and have not known Christ, since the young generation has not heard of Christ."

Gevers is able to speak Farsi, the native tongue of many of the refugees, which he learned in 2006 when he realized that it would be necessary to learn the Iranian migrants' language and culture in order to communicate the Gospel to them.

Trinity, Leipzig, offers Farsi and German services every Sunday at St. Lukaskirche. On most Sundays, the early service is in German. A coffee hour follows and then a service in Farsi. And to bring the Farsi and German people attending closer, one Sunday each month the congregation has only one combined service, in both Farsi and German. Some Lutheran materials have been translated into Farsi, with more work on the horizon. Over 7,000 copies of Luther's Small Catechism in Farsi have already been distributed.

"Every Sunday, it's like Pentecost—different languages, all hearing the Gospel," observed Christiansen after the combined Farsi-German service in St. Lukaskirche, a gorgeous gothic building which had fallen into decay during the atheistic East German years.

No matter the language, God speaks to sinners through His Son: refugees, atheistic Germans, and many tourists and other visitors are drawn to the recently restored St. Lukaskirche, because the bells call out to them again.

Seven Scenes

from the
Advent-Christmas
Story



Advent-Christmas Sermon Series

December 1
1st Sunday in Advent
"John Preaching"
Mark 1:1-8

December 8
2nd Sunday in Advent
"Mary Praising"
Luke 1:26-56

December 15
3rd Sunday in Advent
"Joseph Dreaming"
Matthew 1:18-25

January 5
Epiphany (Transferred from January 6)
"Wise Men Worshipping"
Matthew 2:1-11

December 22
4th Sunday in Advent
"Angels Singing"
Luke 2:8-14

December 25
Christmas Day
"Shepherds Watching"
Luke 2:8

December 29
First Sunday after Christmas
"Herod Fearing"
Matthew 2:12-21

COMMUNION SUNDAYS

As is customary during the winter months, from October thru March we are having Communion twice per month, on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, with Communion this month on both November 3 and 17.



The *Portals of Prayer* devotional booklet for October thru December is available in the Gathering Room, in pocket size, medium size, and large print. A great resource to help you stay close to the Lord!



Christmas Potluck Dinner & Talent Show December 8

Everyone is invited to our fifth annual Christmas Talent Show on Sunday, December 8. This year we will have a Christmas Potluck Dinner right after worship, followed by the talent show.

Please bring a dish (or more) of your choice to contribute to the potluck, main dish, side dish, salad, or bread, and your favorite Christmas treat for dessert—yum!

Everyone—individuals, groups, families—is invited to share your talent! All types of performances are welcome and do not have to be Christmas related, and if Christmas related do not have to be strictly religious—“Jingle Bells” and Santa are welcome!

To get on the program email Pastor Vogts with the talent you will be sharing at pastorvogts@gmail.com. The fun will conclude with a Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long. Come celebrate the holiday season with festive fun!

Missionaries of the Month



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific Missionaries of the Month from around the world, who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

November 3

Deaconess Kim Bueltmann
Germany (See Story Pages 4-5)



Thank you to everyone who helped make our 11th Annual Trunk or Treat on October 27 another big success! Thanks also to Greg Windler for the photos of this event. Lots more pictures online at www.trinitylcms.org/photos.

November 10

Courtney Zalmanoff
Dominican Republic

November 17

Richard & Sarah Sovitzky
Czech Republic

November 24

Rev. Jacob Gaugert
Togo

*“Brothers, pray for us that
the message of the Lord may
spread rapidly and be honored,
just as it was with you.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:1



Beginning Thursday, December 12, we will have the first of a new a quarterly special Communion service held at Trinity called “Worship for Shut-Ins.”

It will be held on the second Thursdays of December, March, June, and September.

The idea is to give our shut-ins an opportunity to attend a shorter, less crowded service, and a chance to see both one another as well as other fellow church members. Though called “Worship for Shut-Ins” it is hoped many more will come, in order to welcome the shut-ins back to their church, assist them getting around, and visit with them.

We will be seeking volunteers to transport shut-ins who would like to attend but are unable to drive. The Communion service will be at 11:00am, somewhat abbreviated, using familiar liturgy and hymns from *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Following the service at about noon we will have a light lunch for everyone in attendance. Details of how that will be provided are yet to be determined. After lunch some may like to stay and visit or even play cards.

Many of the shut-ins have not seen our church since our remodeling and addition, including our new covered drive and elevator that will help facilitate their attendance. Also, since this first event is in mid-December it will give them a chance to see the church decorated for Christmas.