

THE CROSSWORD

October 2023

A PUBLICATION OF HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Vol. LXVI, No. 11

LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME

from Pastor Nathan Erb

In our soundbite culture, it is all too easy to find snippets of truth and ignore the context. To some extent, being succinct is beneficial, especially if you can capture the true heart of the message. The same can be said for biblical passages. We appreciate a short, simple, and to-the-point phrase that captures the imagination, is easy to remember, and can be used to offer comfort, support, or encouragement to someone who could benefit from it.

"Let the children come to me," is one of those phrases. Jesus loves children! He frequently held them up to his adult disciples as examples of great faith and God's grace. Perhaps when you hear Jesus say, "Let the children come to me," another phrase comes to mind: "for the kingdom of God belongs to them." Those two phrases pair nicely. Christ has come for everyone, including the young and the old. However, parsing these two out risks forgetting what Jesus said in between and the context in which he said them.

"Then some people brought little children to Jesus to have him place his hands on

them and pray. But the disciples rebuked them. Then Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:13–14

As much as Jesus wants the children to come to him, he also wants to make sure that we do not hinder them from coming. I think we all understand the frustration he had with his disciples, who actively tried to stop their advance, but equally important is his perpetual command to do nothing to create a barrier between him and them. Interestingly, "doing nothing" can also be a hindrance. So, baked into the command "do not hinder", is also a command to "make a clear path".

We can hinder children from coming to Jesus when we do not

share God's word with them or bring them to worship or Sunday school to hear His word read and taught. We can hinder our children when we do not model the importance of being a part of the body of Christ—the church. We can hinder children from coming to Jesus when we do not pray for them or with them.

We can make a clear path when we read God's word with them, bring them regularly to church and Sunday school, and get involved with the life of the church. We can make a clear path for our children

Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

when we put into practice the things Christ has taught us—to love and serve our neighbors.

(Continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

from Kerry Geffert

“In the Table of Duties, Martin Luther provides Scripture passages that instruct various holy orders and positions about their duties and responsibilities. Under ‘What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors,’ Luther offers 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: ‘We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.’”

Thus begins a letter Holy Cross recently received from Rev. Dr. James A Baneck, Executive Director of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education. His letter was

church workers hold a sacred office because they preach and teach God’s Holy Word to God’s people for life and salvation. They deliver the Gospel to God’s people from birth to death. There is nothing more important than salvation in Jesus Christ, as it is revealed and taught from Holy Scripture. St. Paul writes, ‘But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’ (2 Tim. 3:14-15).”

Does a Man Know if He is Called to the Pastoral Ministry?”)

Further, the LCMS Texas District reminds us that “The process of calling a pastor is a holy and sacred time for a Christian congregation during which its members, as the royal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9), prayerfully seek God’s will for who is to fill the divinely-instituted office of the pastoral ministry (Acts 20:28) in their midst. This is a marked contrast to simply ‘hiring’ an available pastor.”

It’s very easy from these descriptions to then put our pastors on pedestals. Nothing could be further from the truth! It’s Appreciation Month, not adoration month. Much has been written on how false expectations have led to unnecessary stressors for both congregation members and their pastors. It may also be a sign of our weakness in trusting the Lutheran understanding of the call.

Merriam-Webster reminds us that to appreciate is “to grasp the nature, worth, quality, or significance of [someone]; to value or admire highly; or to recognize with gratitude.”

Rev. Dr. Baneck concludes his letter with, “St. Paul reminds us that the Body of Christ is made up of many members. There are many

(Continued on page 5)



to remind us that October has been designated by the LCMS as Church Worker Appreciation Month. Rev. Dr. Baneck continues: “While the pastor is the overseer of our souls, it is good and right that we hold all our ordained and commissioned servants in the church ‘in the highest regard in love because of their work.’ Our full-time LCMS

That’s a mouthful! But I want to hone in on the phrase “sacred office.” Being a pastor is not simply a job, or even a vocation. It is a calling. In a 2018 article, Jonathan Hayashi writes, “The sign of the heavenly calling is intense, all-absorbing desire for the work because of the yearning passion and compelling desire to serve God’s people.” (from “How



HOLY CROSS

LUTHERAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL

Pastor Nathan Erb

pastor@holycrosstrumbull.com

Elisabeth Erb - Music

musicdirector@holycrosstrumbull.com

Michele Glennon - Preschool

203-268-6471

preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT Kerry Geffert
VICE-PRESIDENT
SECRETARY Michele Van Wart
TREASURER Chad Helminger
FINANCIAL SECRETARY Jon Halls
BOARD MEMBERS Dan Senft
..... Pat Deloge

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

203-268-7555

office@holycrosstrumbull.com

Sunday Worship | 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Class | 10:45 a.m.

WWW.HOLYCROSSTRUMBULL.ORG

THE CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR/LAYOUT & DESIGN

Nathan Erb

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Cliff Schrock

PRODUCTION

Mary Schrock

LET THE CHILDREN COME (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

I certainly struggle with this. It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and slack on my ultimate calling as a father: to bring my children to Jesus. It's easy at the end of a hard day to put off doing family devotions or praying together. Sometimes the weariness of the week is seen more clearly than the joy I should have in getting to come to God's house, receive his gifts, study his word, and be in His presence. All of these are hindrances.

"Lord, forgive me. Help me do better". And he will!

We are focusing our efforts this year on the children God has entrusted to us. We just started a new year of Sunday school and are implementing a new program that includes engaging videos, hands-on activities and service projects, and essential biblical principles. We are learning about integrity this month, and how important it is for God's people to "talk the talk AND walk the walk." Or, as one student put it, "doing what is right even when no one is looking."

We are also offering monthly Youth Nights, where our teen-aged youth can grow in their relationships with each other and in their faith. It is tough out there as a young person, and it is important to have church friends who can walk alongside you and encourage you in that walk.

A week-long mission trip planned for next summer will be a significant addition to our offerings for young people. Students in middle and high school will travel to Harrisburg, PA, in July to work with YouthWorks, an organization that operates service sites across the country. They will have some hard work to do, but they will witness the joy that they can give to the people they serve. Sometimes a small act of kindness can make a huge difference in people's lives. In the coming months, you will have the opportunity to pray for them, encourage them, and financially support them as they prepare.

That is what we intend to do in order to provide a clear path to Jesus for the children of the Holy Cross. And you can certainly help with those efforts. But what about the children in your lives? How can you share Jesus' love with your own children or grandchildren, nieces and nephews, or kids running around the neighborhood? There are countless options, but it is vital that we take advantage of them so that our kids can experience the love of their loving God and Savior, Jesus Christ. +

Pastor Nathan Erb

GOLF FELLOWSHIP

Extremely wet course conditions do not deter two golfers in annual outing

from Cliff Schrock

I am a golfer. That makes me inherently frustrated, primarily in the way for every sweet swing I make there is a fizzle, flop and flub many times over. I have also been for the last 12 years the co-organizer of the Holy Cross golf outing with Dave Bogen, and frustration in that regard comes when weeks of planning are ruined by a rogue weather pattern.

Such was the case in September 2022, and it was repeated on Saturday, September 30 of this year, both times by too much moisture. (There was also a “coldout” in the last few years when cold air and strong winds sent most of the entrants heading home.)

The type of frustration that comes with organizing an event is that the success or fulfillment of plans have been thwarted. The frustration level doubles when something nonsensical causes the plans to go awry. (This was experienced in spades by the tag sale coordinators.)

Let’s take a look at 2022, for example. Every Saturday leading up to the golf date and every Saturday after the date were pristine, blue skies, nice comfortable temps and sunshine. But the day of the golf outing was rainy and unpleasant. The outing was canceled.

This year there had been a lot of work to get 12 golfers to appear. We normally get four tee times at Tashua Knolls for four foursomes but we had to “give” one back and

settle for three afternoon slots at 12:30, 12:40, and 12:50. We had a nice little group all set:

12:30 p.m. – **The All in the Family** group: Charlie Senft, Dan Senft, Vinny Riccio, Alex Riccio

12:40 p.m. – **The New Kids on the Block Meet Jimmy Finch** group: Nathan Erb, Uriah Patterson, Braden Atwood, Jim Finch

12:50 p.m. – **The We’re Still Standing, Battle Tested** group: Dave Bogen, Andrew Struzik, Tom Wuennemann, Cliff Schrock. (Uriah and Braden are preschool parents; Tom is a friend of Cliff’s.)



Uriah Patterson, left, and Braden Atwood boldly walked a sloppy Tashua Knolls golf course.

The head cover for Uriah’s driver urged the user to hit with gusto!



I know that I felt on September 23, when the tag sale was postponed to the 30th, that surely we would have great weather. The tag sale wouldn’t be hit twice with bad weather. Would it?

The weather forecast on the 24th for the 30th was looking great, 66 and sunny, but by Thursday rain was predicted to come down in buckets and no letup until Saturday afternoon!

With 5 to 10 inches of rain soaking the area, Tashua almost closed the course by Saturday morning. The course was swampy, and there was so much water even the cart

paths were flooded in spots. But rather than close the course staff did the worst thing they could do to a desperate golfer: tempt them. They kept the course open, but said only walking would be allowed due to the damage cart wheels could do to the turf. Our choice was we could play in a slight rain to start and have sopping feet within half a hole, or bag it, and say Mother Nature, you win again.

After talking it over with Dave, I sent out an email Saturday morning spelling out the situation and asking to see who still wanted to walk. Like air slowly released from a balloon, so did the emails slowly

(Continued on page 8)



BUILDING BLOCKS

from Holy Cross Christian Preschool

We are a month into our new school year! The children are curious, engaged, energetic and ready to experience all our school has to offer!

We have been busy getting to know all the children and their families. In September we learned what it means to be a good friend and how God made each of us so very special. One of our favorite themes is our study of apples. Apples provide many opportunities for incorporating important math and science concepts such as sorting, comparing, cooking and learning about life cycles.

In October we will explore the season of fall and pumpkins. We will measure pumpkins, weigh them and cut them open to see what is inside.

One of the things that makes our school unique is the Christian component. The children love our Bible story times together and are learning of God's great love for them. In September the children learned how God made this beautiful world. They learned about the first sin

and how God "took care" of sin by providing us a Savior...Jesus! October's Bible stories include an exploration of the Old Testament to see how God blesses families as shown in the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.

One of our favorite weekly activities is participating in chapel time with Pastor Erb. Last month Pastor showed us some very special things in our church. He read us the Creation story and also taught us sign language to the chorus of "Jesus Loves Me." Every week we will have a special lesson, song and acknowledgement of birthdays. This is a very special time for both the children and the teachers!

WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!

Check out our school's Facebook page to see pictures and descriptions of all our exciting activities!

www.facebook.com/

[HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull/](https://www.facebook.com/HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull/)

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 2)

parts, but one body (1 Cor. 12:20). It is good that we encourage and appreciate one another in the life of the congregation and school. While we acknowledge and appreciate the service of everyone in the church, please join me in especially thanking our ordained and

commissioned servants of the church, that together, we may 'serve the Lord with gladness' (Psalm 100:2)."

During this month of October, I pray that you will feel called to say to Pastor Erb, "I appreciate you." +

A Study in Acts

from Cliff Schrock

ACTS 28:1-31

Twenty-eight months is a long time. Going back that far takes us to early summer 2021, when the Covid pandemic was still rampant and life was about masks and immunizations and social-distancing. We were 28 months younger (yeah!). We were on the cusp of filling our pastoral vacancy. And for the purposes of this column, that's when this study of the Book of Acts began. We won't do a poll, but I wonder how many of those who read Chapter 1 are still going strong and ready for Chapter 28 to close out the book. Compared to some Old Testament books, 28 chapters is not that long, but the New Testament has mostly moderate- to shorter-length books so 28 is rather robust. It's the same number of books as in Matthew. But before I continue with this final-chapter, wrap-up analysis, please pause now to read Chapter 28 and how Apostle Paul's trial culminated in his Rome arrival.

In the penultimate chapter 27, the saga of Paul's long trial continued but this time he wasn't standing before someone in authority but being put on a ship to sail to Rome for a final confrontation. The main chapter figure is, again, the incredibly strong and devoted Paul, whose inspiring faith through persecution and threats has been the primary thrust since Chapter 13 as he has been continually challenged to testify about his faith and defend his message. Chapter 27 detailed the water journey Paul and other prisoners underwent to go to Rome; he left the land of Judea, never to go back to a land so important to every Jew. With him were fellow Christians Luke and Aristarchus. After initially enjoying a calm journey and landing at Sidon, Myra, and Fair Havens on Crete, the party was engulfed in a two-week storm that resulted in the ship wrecking on a coastal area of a land they did not recognize or know what it was. All of the 276 people onboard made it safely onto land.

As Chapter 28 begins, in verses 1 to 10 we read that the native residents of this unknown island felt sympathy for the shipwrecked passengers and built a fire to warm them in the cold air. As they began conversing with the natives, the ship travelers determined they were on the island of Malta, south of Italy. The locals took notice that there were both soldiers and prisoners who wrecked, and they observed that Paul was one of the prisoners. When Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake as he added wood to the fire, they took that as a sign that he must have done something severe, such as murder, and that the gods would not allow him to live even though he had escaped the sea. However, when nothing happened to Paul and the bite had no effect on him, the natives thought Paul must be a god of some kind because not even a deadly snake could harm him. In actual fact, Paul was doing God's will and was under divine protection, as Jesus said would happen when He spoke to the disciples at the end of Mark.

The aura around Paul must have been incredible because the landowner of that area of Malta, Publius, had him and the others as guests at his house for three days. During his stay, Paul learned that Publius' father had a life-threatening illness, so Paul prayed for him and he became well. Such a feat could not be kept quiet and reports of what Paul had done went around Malta, and quickly people of Malta were bringing their sick to the Apostle and he healed them. Through these miracles, not only the islanders but those who had been with Paul on the ship could see the power of God. Paul took the opportunity to preach about Jesus and His ministry on earth. The good news was pleasing to everyone and the ship passengers were content to stay on the island for three months as they waited out the weather.

Verses 11 to 31 describe the continuation of the journey to Rome and Paul's life there. At the end of the three months on Malta, spring had arrived and its more favorable winds, so Julius, the Roman captain of the ship, had procured another ship and had his soldiers load the prisoners for travel to Italy. The Malta natives, who had been so energized by Paul and his message, gave the Christian travelers gifts and saw them off with many provisions for the journey. The ship stopped a couple of times

and made it safely to Puteoli, on the north side of the Gulf of Naples and known today as Pozzuoli. From there the entourage would go by land to Rome, a distance of about 150 miles. But before that portion of the journey, Julius allowed Paul and the other Christians to visit the Christian residents of Puteoli for a week.

The respite was welcome because the travelers would have to make the 150 miles by foot. Paul's initial thoughts on the walk would likely have been heavy, not only because of the heavy chain he bore but because he was concerned about whether he would have many chances to preach in Rome and whether people would take a prisoner seriously. His mood brightened, however, when he got within 40 miles of the city. At that point, Christians from Rome had come out to greet him, and a second group came out when he was 10 miles away. Paul's mood was boosted and when the group arrived at Rome, Julius completed his assignment by turning in his prisoners to the captain of the guard. Julius likely convinced the captain to treat Paul well because the Apostle was allowed to live in a house by himself, although he had to have a soldier with him at all times. Paul's Rome arrival would have been around 60 or 61 A.D.

Taking the initiative and not wasting any time to defend himself, after three days in Rome Paul requested to see the city's Jewish leaders. He explained how their counterparts in Jerusalem had been combatant with him and were the reason he'd been imprisoned. Surprised to hear this, the Jews of Rome said they knew nothing of these difficulties, they had not heard from anyone from Jerusalem to press charges against Paul, and asked Paul to instruct them about Jesus Christ. They had known about Christians but didn't know what Christians believed. Pleased to have this opportunity, Paul the prisoner was still in missionary mode and he fully instructed them about Jesus' mission, His suffering and death and how He as Savior rose from the dead.

The Jews were careful listeners, but as with the Jews in Jerusalem and other locales, some believed and others were resentful of Paul's words. When the dissenters made their displeasure clear, Paul stood his ground, and in quoting from Isaiah starting in verse 25, Paul retorted, "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, 'Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people's

heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn – and I would heal them.' Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

Although still a prisoner, Paul remained in Rome for two years, in his own house under house arrest, with soldiers likely taking turns guarding him. Paul preached to each one just as he preached to anyone who came to visit. One commentary expanded about this: "How Paul supported himself we are not told. Whether it was from gifts he was given or work that he performed is not known. In [the] last view of him in Acts, Paul was still witnessing and speaking forth the word of truth. The book ends without telling us what happened to him, though tradition has it that Paul was released from prison after appearing before the emperor (2 Timothy 4:16, 17)."

Note how in the last two verses of the entire book it is indicated that Paul preached about Jesus without being impeded. And during this time he is believed to have written many of the letters to congregations that we have in the New Testament, such as Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.

The Book of Acts ends with nothing more to chronicle about Paul's life; there isn't a fully accurate account for the rest of his life. He did become friends with Onesimus, the runaway slave owned by Philemon, a Christian from Colossae. Onesimus helped care for Paul while being taught about Christ.

We can surmise that Paul did not bring Christianity to Rome since there already were Christians there when he arrived. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he hadn't been to Rome yet. So even though he lived there he was not a major leader of Rome's Christian church. Paul's end is believed to have occurred during Roman Emperor Nero's massive persecution of Christians, perhaps in the years 64 to 67, Paul was arrested and believed beheaded. While in prison and believed headed toward death, Paul wrote Timothy and said the memorable words in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the

(Continued on page 8)

GOLF FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 4)

pop in with one pass after another until just two were yet to check in: Uriah Patterson and Braden Atwood, two of our preschool fathers! They had been recruited by Pastor Erb when our normal corps of golfers failed to muster enough players for more than two groups. They agreed to come out and use the 12:50 tee time.

As I discovered when I met Uriah and Braden at the course to give them two sleeves of golf balls (six total) and present them with the prizes we would have awarded for closest to the pin and longest drive in recognition of their representing our outing, the reason two preschool fathers still showed up is pretty simple: when opportunities arise to play golf, you take them. Braden has a 3-year-old and five-month-old, Uriah has a 3-year-old and another child on the way. As Uriah said, he didn't know how many more chances he'd have to play golf once a second child came along. He's a 12-handicapper and felt he needed to get golf in when he



could. Braden, originally from Indiana, was mainly into wrestling in his youth.

A gentleman named Charles (“call me Charlie”) Mills of Wilton, who had been scheduled to play a match at Richter Park in Danbury that morning but was canceled out, was put in with Uriah and Braden and off they went a little before 1 off the back nine. As I watched the threesome tee off and head off toward their tee shots, I wistfully thought, “That should be me!” There was a time when I was the one who went out in the slop to play golf. But time and a bad knee can change things.

Prior to leaving, I grabbed my putter and some golf balls from my car and practiced putting. I paused to look at the parking lots. There were 42 cars. Allowing for the work staff, maybe there were 30 people out walking the course. By 2 o'clock the rain was gone and sky brightening. The next day the weather would be sunny, dry, with temperature in the high 70s by 2:30. Tashua's parking lot would be full.

Frustrating. +

A STUDY IN ACTS

(Continued from pages 6-7)

good fight. I have finished the race the Lord gave me to run. I have kept the faith. Soon the Lord will give me the crown of righteousness that is waiting me in heaven.”

The Book of Acts has been great to study historically and spiritually. It showed the good news was first preached in Jerusalem and then eventually outward to the entire world. Jesus had said in Chapter 1:1b that “You will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world,” and

that's how Christianity expanded, in that order exactly as Christ said.

There were other progressions that occurred as predicted: the church was born and grown through testing, scattered by persecutions, and reached the ends of the earth; the first believers at local churches were Jews, the apostles soon taught that the saving news was also meant for the Gentiles, and the message was recognized as a universal gospel for everyone. Today we can—and have—read Acts to be inspired to be believers who grow into lives of Christian devotion and service. +

Sources | Harper Study Bible; The Everyday Bible: New Testament; Egermeier's Bible Story Book; The Acts of the Apostles, Neal M. Flanagan.

Celebrating this Month

OCTOBER

It's fun to be recognized on your special day! Even more so, it's special to know others are praying for you. It is our hope that as you spend time in daily prayer, you will remember your fellow Holy Cross members on their special day.

BIRTHDAYS

Date Name

- 2 Linda Torok
- 3 Kristen Messerschmitt
- 4 Doris Dietman
- 5 Bill Flammann
- 5 Deb Leslie
- 7 Dave Bogen
- 8 Chris Deloge
- 9 Lori Thompson
- 11 Greg Dowling
- 12 Sophie Martineli
- 16 Audrey & Kaiden Gomes
- 18 Abigail Erb
- 20 Joel Wilson
- 25 Barbara Schneider
- 26 Heather Fanning
- 26 Kendra Norman
- 27 Maxwell Carola
- 27 Ethan Festi
- 28 Mathew Benson
- 28 John Deloge
- 28 Elisabeth Erb
- 28 Ingrid Leibold
- 29 Barbara White
- 30 Michael Weldon
- 31 Marcia Wilson

If there is someone that should be on one of these lists, but isn't...please alert the office so we can update our records!

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

- Myrtle Anderson
- Sabine Bonnar
- Jace Broadbin
- Maxwell Carola
- Cindy Ciccio
- Chris Deloge
- Grace Ely
- Sarah Ely
- Charlotte Fanning
- Justin Fanning
- Nate Helminger
- Victoria Hwang
- Stephanie Liptack
- Julianne Nyitrai
- Matt Rentz
- Diane Sederquest
- Ashley Testani
- Dexter Walker

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Date Name

- 12 Joshua and Joelle Cyr
- 14 Brendan and DJ Broadbin
- 16 Gary and Donna DiLalla
- 17 Tim and Marie Morris
- 24 Marty Schaivone and Sherry Duff