

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Malone, Texas 76660


Established 1886

July 2004

Grace, mercy and peace to you in Christ Jesus, God Incarnate!

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life;

(Nicene Creed)

hese words from the Creed call to mind Luther's words from the Explanation of the Third Article of the *Apostles* Creed. There we confess that "On the Last Day He [the Holy Spirit] will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ." The Holy Spirit gives us life—He is the One who creates a new, living repentant hearts within us, when He creates faith which trusts in Christ Jesus as our Savior.

It is vital that we remember than only the Triune God creates and sustains faith: faith is *not* man's work; "...it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Eph. 2:8b-9)

As the Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, He, too, is Lord. As we confessed on Trinity Sunday in the Athanasian Creed: "So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There are three Gods or three Lords." (The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 53)

The Holy Scriptures teach the *unity* of the Godhead, and the *Trinity* of Persons. The Holy Trinity is one God and yet three Persons. None of the 'gods' (idols) of the nations are Lord—nor can they give life. But the Triune God is Lord and gives life—and He gives to us new, eternal life in Christ—a hope which will not disappoint!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Heiser



Dedication of the New Sunday School Building June 6, 2004

Trinity Sunday 2004 was truly a day of celebration! Not only did we observe one of the four high feast days of the Church Year, but Salem also observed her 118th anniversary as a congregation and dedicated the new Sunday School building.

With the dedication of the new building, the labors of rebuilding—begun with the construction of the new church—are finally completed. All of us hope and pray that the Church and Sunday School will serve to the glory of the Triune God for many years to come.





Everyone enjoyed the fellowship time during the potluck. Many thanks to the ladies of the LWML for preparing deserts for the reception following the dedication!



The dozen desks donated by the Michael Krueger family are a helpful addition to the new building.



Congratulations, Kenny!

Having concluded two years of confirmation instruction, Kenny Kelm was examined during the Sunday School hour on May 23rd. His confirmation was the following Sunday—the Feast of Pentecost.

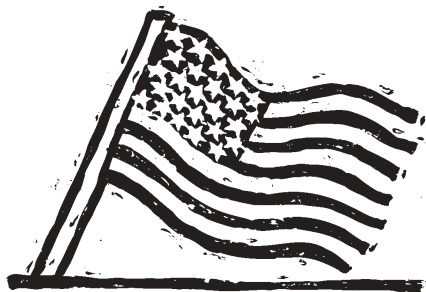
It has been a joy having Kenny in confirmation these past years! Our time together in class has reminded me how blessed I have been each year with students who are diligent in their studies and zealous for the Word of

God. It is my prayer for Kenny (and for all my prior catechumens) that he (and they) remain filled with such diligence and zeal. Confirmation is only one step in our walk as Christians. The years pose many challenges to our faith, but when we are built up on God's holy Word, we have the assurance which the Holy Spirit gives to us through that Word that the Triune God will never let us suffer more than our faith can endure!

SALEM LUTHERAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We will have our monthly breakfast and Bible study on **Saturday, July 17th**. Pastor will give a preliminary report on the events of the Synodical Confession (which takes place from the 10th through the 15th.)

As usual, our breakfast begins at **8 a.m.** All men of the congregation are strongly encouraged to join us!



July 4th Fun Day Celebration Co-Sponsored by the LWML and Men's Fellowship

All the plans are complete for our July 4th Fun Day. All activities will begin at 12:30 p.m., with hamburgers, hot dogs, and nacho's. All games and booths will begin at 1:30 p.m. and end at 7 p.m. so that we can clean up and get ready for Vacation Bible School the next day.

Games that are planned are: Tic Tac Toe toss (with bean bags), Cake Walk, Dominoes, Horseshoes, Croquet, Ring Toss, Duck Pond, 'Go Fish,' and Bean Bag Throw.

There will also be a Silent Auction from 12:30 until 4 p.m.

Live music will be furnished by Morris Kruger and his Musicians.

There will be a charge for the meals and activities. All games will be 25 or 50 cents. Food will be no more than \$3.25 a plate, including drink and chips. All funds raised (including matching funds from Thrivent) will go to Salem's weekly Radio Mission.

Please come and join us, and if you have a guest, please bring them, too.

We need all helpers—men, women, and children—to be at the Church at 9 a.m. on Saturday, July 3rd, to help get everything ready for Sunday. We also need lots of help after everything is over to clean up. Thank you!

Rachel Kunkel

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 5th through 9th, 6:00 – 8:30 P.M.

This year we are using the wonderful “I Am” V.B.S. series from *Pax Domini*. The classes teach Jesus’ “I Am” statements:

- I am the Good Shepherd
- I am the Way, Truth, Life; the Door
- I am the Light of the World
- I am the True Vine; the Bread of Life
- I am the Resurrection and the Life

Classes are available for all children from preschool through age 12! In addition to lessons, there will be crafts, time for singing, a puppet show each evening, and snacks.

At this point there are teachers for each age group, but helpers are still needed and will be greatly appreciated.

Needed for the Kitchen:

- handi-wrap
- ziplock bags (quart and gallon)
- aluminum foil

“THANK YOU!”

Keeping everything working around Church can take a lot of work! Therefore, we want to express our appreciate to everyone who helps out in any way. Special thanks are expressed to:

Frieda Neumann, for making new purificators and a communion veil for use in the Divine Service;

Weldon Reinke, for his work on trimming shrubs and trees;

Kay Watson, for helping to keep the church clean;

All who helped with the new flag pole;

Everyone who has helped with the mowing;

Billy Watson and **Pam Krumvieda**, for helping fight the fire ants;

the **Michael** and **Diana Krueger family** for re-stripping the parking lot and for carpeting the Sunday School;

Lee Boortz, Charles Huse, and Morris Kruger, for prepare for, and laying of, carpeting in the Sunday School;

Rachel Kunkel and **Dorothy Markwardt**, for defrosting the freezer;

Donna Huse, **Tony Zettler**, **Dorothy Markwardt**, **Rachel Kunkel**, and **Lodie Banik** for on-going help with newsletters and bulletins;

and EVERYONE who has been helping through prayers or other actions in these or other ways around Church`!

SYNOD (?) WATCH

by the Rev. C. D. Hudson
Christ Lutheran Church—Richmond, MO

Therefore in the sight of God and of all Christendom [the entire Church of Christ], to those now living and to those who shall come after us, we wish to testify that the above declaration (the Book of Concord in its entirety — my notation) concerning all the controverted articles presented and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine and confession, in which we also will appear, by God's grace, with unterrified hearts before the Judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and for it will give an account. We will neither speak nor write, privately or publicly, anything contrary to this declaration, but by the help of God's grace, intend to abide thereby

(The BOC, FC. SD. Ch.12, para 40 [Jacobs Translation, p. 670])

Dear Fellow Saints,

The Synodical Convention is now two weeks away, and as you might well imagine, the maneuvering by all parties is intense. The “conservative” faction has just mailed out a second video promoting their particular candidate to all convention delegates and alternates, extolling his virtues and assuring the recipients that this is the man that must be elected as the President of Synod in order to save “our beloved synod.”

Both “liberal” and “conservative” factions have formulated and published their “voting lists” once again providing the voting delegates with a list of names that “need to be elected” to specific offices. The “liberals” (who prefer, in true political fashion, to be called “moderates”) have “The One List” for both Primary and Alternate Candidates which is provided by their umbrella organization “Jesus First.” The “conservatives” have their “United List” which was birthed out of a process that is to some degree rather secretive (kind of like the proverbial “smoke filled room” of secular politics).

Without a doubt this is a struggle for high stakes. The offices to be filled include, but are not limited to the Synodical President; Vice Presidents (5); VP - Finance; Synodical Secretary (interestingly, a position which has much to say about Synod); Board of Directors (6 people, 4 Lay, 2 Clergy — and one of the most important power bases of this church body); CTCR (Commission of Theology and Church Relations — a very important prize for both parties) one of three boards (BOD, and CCM being the other two)

which wield enormous influence in this “church body.” Whichever party gains the majority vote on the majority of these boards (especially the three) will virtually control this church body.

And that is the goal, for all those actively involved in this “process,” liberal and conservative alike, to gain control of a majority of the “right” offices, and the right “boards” — to preserve the status quo.

From this writer’s perspective, and that of a number of other confessional pastors, herein lies the greatest tragedy of this spectacle that is continuing to unfold: that both parties, liberal and conservative, are spending great amounts of time, energy and most assuredly money, to preserve an “institution” that has become as political in its nature as they are! I submit that in its essence, this struggle is not about “theology proper,” but “theology” formulated by **political process**! And this now accepted practice, is in the end, going to be terminal for this church body, just as it has been for every other church body who has succumbed to this tragic but all too common church affliction. From an institutional point of view, I submit that Missouri Synod can’t help itself. Oh, it might be able to briefly delay the process, by the “conservatives” succeeding in getting some of “their men” elected to those boards and offices, but it can’t stop it, because the purpose of the institution has evolved far from what it was originally intended to do: train church workers and, by combining the financial resources of congregations, to send out missionaries, to an institution whose first priority—is self-preservation. The truth is, the highest priority, the number one goal of both “liberals” and “conservatives” is the preservation this church body, because from what I have observed, what the members of both parties fear most, is the loss of “synod.”

This is why I wrote last month: “The liberals” can move forward without a troubled conscience, because their theological position can tolerate a host of different degrees of confessional faith-less-ness. The “conservatives” continue to be in varying degrees of anguish, but only to the degree that it does not require of them to make what is, for many of them —the truly unacceptable decision. That issue is what we will discuss in the concluding part next month.

It is a tragic reality that as corporate bodies, the thing that both “liberals” and “conservatives” truly fear the most is — having to “leave” Missouri! This is “the truly unacceptable decision!” for as difficult as it is for some of us to understand, for many a pastor, there is no life, and far more troubling, there is no church—outside of the fold of the Missouri Synod!

This is why it is now a commonplace, in all of Missouri's "official" publications, to see the Synod almost always referred to as "our church." This is the mind-set that then allows "official decisions" to be made by various Synodical boards and committees and even convention delegates that are in direct conflict with the Lutheran Confessions, and thus Holy Scripture as well, with nary a complaint, for "the church" has spoken!

Dear fellow saints, "synod" is not the church! No one is going to be saved because they are a member of a congregation that holds membership in the Missouri Synod. And there are going to be saints in heaven who are not members of the Missouri Synod

The Christian life is all about "doctrine," faithfulness to true Biblical doctrine and practice, not Synodical affiliation! For any church body to be viable, it must contend openly, vigorously and faithfully for its confession, or just as quickly turn to repentance when its error is brought to attention. It is to put the children of the Holy Trinity at great spiritual risk, and a theological absurdity, for a church body to rely upon a process that takes three years to correct a theological decision that was made in direct contravention of its confession and thereby Holy Scripture as well! And then to determine if it was truly an error on the basis of whether a majority vote was obtained in a convention is, I submit, outside the Church!

The theological un-faithfulness of the Missouri Synod has evolved over a lengthy period of years. As a whole, its members still officially take great pride in proclaiming it to be a "confessional" church, but one can't confess and thus can't live what one does not know. Asking groups of pastors to assemble together in an attempt to arrive at a mutually agreeable theology and practice, when all belong to the same church body and have all freely subscribed to the same confession, is a public demonstration on institutional and confessional failure.

And so, the struggle goes on. The "liberals" are just as serious and committed to "their" theology and theological agenda as are the "conservatives" even after the pastoral "group hugs" have passed. What both factions have in common is that neither have demonstrated a willingness to let the Lutheran Confessions speak for themselves! Both factions have confessed the Lutheran Confessions "are a true and clear exhibition of Holy Scripture" and yet both view and implement the Lutheran Confessions through the will of the Synod, by majority vote! The Synod has spoken!

Dear fellow redeemed, the confession we make as a congregation mandates us not to be “liberal” or “conservative” — but confessional! We must dare to stand on that which we have said corporately, we “*believe, teach and confess . . .*” that Holy Scripture is the inspired and inerrant word of the Holy Trinity and that the Lutheran Confessions truly are “*a true and clear exhibition of Holy Scripture*” and as such where it speaks on matters of doctrine and practice, those are the guidelines we must live, if we are to remain faithful! Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Symbols are not to be subordinated to our corporate will or opinions, but we to them, by virtue of our unconditional subscription. We subscribe freely and willingly, not under duress. And as a pastor, I must implement what they teach, and reject and condemn what they do, if I am to be faithful in my office.

If any church body departs from this way of life, it has departed from Holy Scripture, and thus from its confession, and a faithful Lutheran, pastor and lay alike must — for conscience sake — depart from it!

Take comfort in the fact that “church” is not identified by a denominational name, but where “*the Word is preached in its purity and the Sacraments distributed according to Christ’s institution.*” If you worship in a congregation where these “marks” are found, you may rest assured that, as a Lutheran, you are, by your own confession, where you are promised the Holy Trinity you will be! You have His good and salutary gifts, the forgiveness of all your sins, life and salvation.

A denominational name may be nice—but it is not necessary! Will there be another? I suggest yes, for there are other confessional pastors and congregations who have made, and are striving to live, the confession you have made, and are striving to live for Christ glory. The rest is up to the Holy Trinity!

The following is a shocking example of what can happen to a parish when the district controls their property. Thanks be to God that is not the case for us! Reading this article, one cannot help but ask, "How does evicting a congregation from its own church advance the Gospel?" The situation in the LC—MS is out of control when events such as this transpire.

My thanks to Dorothy for pointing this article out to me.—Pastor

Chinese New York Lutherans Oppose Benke

(from Christian News, June 7, 2004)

Immanuel (Chinese) Lutheran Church, Bayside, New York, is threatening to take serious action against Dr. David Benke, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Atlantic District if he proceeds with his plans to sell the congregation's property. LCMS President Kieschnick, who has been praising large churches while expressing dissatisfaction with small churches with unimpressive statistics, is a big supporter of Benke. The 2004 Lutheran Annual of the LCMS reports that Immanuel Chinese has 80 baptized members, 60 communicant members and an average attendance of 80.

Christian News has received the following letters and documents from Immanuel Lutheran Church—LCMS, 210-10 Horace Harding Express Way, Bayside, New York:

To: Christian News
Editor, Herman Otten

Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers? The Lord will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness, the Lord our God will destroy them. Psalm 94:16, 23.

May the wicked people who want to sell our church building, their power, and their money perish with them. Because their hearts are not right before God. Acts 8:20.

TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Missouri Synod Board of Directors:

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We, the brothers and sisters of Immanuel Chinese Lutheran Church in Bayside, New York are petitioning for your interjection to stop the Atlantic District President, the Dr. and Reverend David Benke from selling our spiritual home located at 210-10 Horace Harding

Expressway, Bayside, New York, to other churches. Attached for your reference is a letter from Dr. David Benke, President of the Atlantic District, dated May 18, 2004.

The basis of Dr. Benke's letter is totally unsubstantiated and his missionary purpose and plans to sell Immanuel are unrelated. The Bible never cited the selling of a mission field due to financial crisis or other ulterior motives. Immanuel Chinese Lutheran Church had undergone several setbacks since the passing of Pr. Samson Kao in 2001. Shortly after, Pr. Jukka Karriainen left Immanuel to join Trinity Lutheran Church in Hicksville, Long Island. We had implored the Circuit Counselor and the Atlantic District leaders to send us another English Pastor or to provide us with pastoral care, but we were ignored. Instead, we had to arrange for our own preaching assistance. Dr. Benke, who lives next to Immanuel, never came to guide us or preach to our English congregation. Where was his leadership and guidance when we needed them? For him to accuse Immanuel of "not in large part produced a great harvest of souls, but mostly modest and static worshiping groups" is totally false and uncorroborated. Praise God, since Pastor Paul Lin started shepherding the Immanuel congregation in July 2003, we witnessed more than 20% growth in membership. More than a dozen people were baptized. Another dozen of Christ seekers are now studying God's word. We have ten cell groups. Our offerings have increased by more than 50%.

We know that Dr. Benke's purpose is contrary to what is stated in his letter. How does he know that we are not harvesting souls if he is never around? There are churches within the Atlantic District that are less productive in Dr. Benke's terms. Unlike Immanuel, the Atlantic District does not own those church properties and they are of little value to promote Dr. Benke's underlying personal interest, namely, to win his re-election at any cost.

The way we found out that our church home is up for sale is very unethical and a disgrace to God's Name especially when the President of the Atlantic District does it. Our current pastor, Rev. Paul Lin, was at the church when a real estate agent named Nick Psomopoulos walked in with his clients and told Pr. Lin that they are here to buy our church. We were never informed by anyone in the Atlantic District about this. In fact, Kenneth Ko of the Grace Lutheran Church, which also worships at the Immanuel property, said he didn't know either. Mr. Ko is a member of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic District! Why did Dr. Benke act alone? It was only after we contacted our building committee representative about this matter, who in turn alerted Dr. Benke that we were very upset about his disrespect to his shepherding of the local church, that Dr. Benke hastily agreed to meet with us. At the meeting he assured us that Immanuel is not for sale and the Chinese congregation will not be forced to relocated or evicted against our will. More than twenty brothers and sisters witnessed his reassurance. Then just last Friday, May 14th, Mr. Psomopoulos made another unannounced visit to Immanuel with another group of buyers. He even had the keys to the property and said he has access to the building

regardless of our presence.

Dr. Benke advised us to consider relocating our church to the Chapel Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hollis Hills so he could sell the Immanuel property. At Dr. Benke's insistence, we met with the leaders of that church to explore our mutual interests. Although we were promised that there would be a follow up meeting to discuss the feasibility of a partnership, one month has gone by, we have yet to hear from either Chapel Redeemer or Dr. Benke. Dr. Benke also has promised us that he would tell the real estate agent to stop bringing potential buyers to visit Immanuel until we have exhausted our options. This turned out to be a TOTAL lie.

Is this how the Atlantic District treats its minority congregations? Is this the way Jesus taught us to be the light and salt of the world? Even residential landlords need to give their tenants prior notice and cannot just walk in to their apartments anytime they please. Dr. Benke totally disregards the fact that the brothers and sisters of Immanuel Chinese Lutheran Church worshipped here for over eighteen years. In the May 18th letter, he gave us an ultimatum to reach a decision by May 26 or lose our church. This is an unreasonable and outrageous demand. We shouldn't be forced into making a hasty decision to buy the property ourselves or to partner with another church without our congregational meeting and discerning the hand of God through prayer.

We strongly feel that Immanuel is our spiritual home. It is the ONLY Chinese Lutheran church in Bayside and vicinity. Dr. Benke mentioned that he "has great heart for mission and ministry among Chinese-speaking and Chinese-cultured people". How does selling our church to the highest bidder to a non-Chinese Lutheran church substantiate his mission? Immanuel Lutheran Church is located in a perfect mission field being the only Chinese speaking and cultured church in this community. Middle School 74 is situated right next to us and is populated with Asian children. MS74 is also used as a Chinese language school on Saturdays. A great number of these children and their parents are unchurched, providing us with a fantastic outreach opportunity. It is also due to our location that Pr. Lin initiated the "Spiritual Cafe" in an effort to outreach to parents and students of MS74. In fact, some of these families became Christians because of our outreach efforts. Bayside Immanuel is where we belong and will continue to evangelize in this community.

Furthermore, we also want to point out that the former English congregation donated the Immanuel property to the Atlantic District after Immanuel Chinese congregation started worshipping at this location in 1988. The deed belongs to the local church - Immanuel Lutheran Church located at 210-10 Horace Harding Expressway, Bayside, New York and we are the members of Immanuel Lutheran Church. We have been here for over 18 years and our congregation is Immanuel Lutheran Church. The deed should remain with the local church and Immanuel Chinese Lutheran Church should have the possession right. It must not be sold.

Dr. Benke's letter left us with no choice but to seek legal counsel to stop his

unfair treatment to Immanuel Chinese Lutheran Church. Unless the Atlantic District settles our grievances, we shall use whatever recourse available to resolve this matter and the subject will become public domain.

In Christ we remain.
Respectfully yours,
Andy Jao
President

CHURCH COUNCIL—We will have our regular quarterly meeting on **July 10th** at **7 p.m.** If you will be unable to attend, please notify pastor in advance.

VOTERS MEETING—Our next quarterly voters meeting will be **July 18th**. We will have a potluck following divine service. The meeting will begin at **1:00 p.m.**

MIDWEEK CLASS—All are invited to attend the on-going midweek Bible classes, **Wednesdays** from **11 a.m. to noon** (with lunch to follow). **HOWEVER:** Due to the synodical convention, we will **not** have class on July 14th, and because of VBS we will not have class on July 7th.

GAMES NIGHT —We will have our next games night on Friday, **July 23rd**, beginning at **7:00 p.m.** Everyone is invited to bring their favorite game and snack food and join us for an enjoyable evening!

	ATTENDANCE	OFFERING	COMMUNED
May 30	63	\$1,892.75	40
TOTAL	333	\$6,975.30	199
June 6	72	\$1,648.00	63
June 13	43	\$ 985.00	35
June 20	72	\$2,439.95*	n.a.
June 27	NOT YET AVAILABLE		
TOTAL TO DATE	187	\$5,072.95	98

** In addition to regular offerings of \$2,439.95, an additional \$199 was given in the door offering to help cover costs of attending the Synodical Convention.*

Budget for 2004: +\$1,734.49. A total of \$1,465.69 is needed each week for budgeted expenses.

Salem Lutheran Church

718 HCR 3424 E

Malone, TX 76660

(254) 533-2330

The Rev. James D. Heiser, Pastor

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Divine Service

Holy Communion—1st and 2nd Sundays

On the Radio: KHDR (1560 AM) Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

On the Web: <http://www.salemchurch.net>