

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Malone, Texas

July 2007



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

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8, *Epistle for Trinity 4*)

St. Paul didn't sugar coat things, did he? In fact, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this saint spoke the truth rather bluntly on many occasions. In the midst of our complaints—even sorrows and sufferings—it is easy to wonder, "What is this all about?" Paul didn't simply dismiss these things as unimportant; rather, he compared them to the glory which shall be revealed *in us*. Paul wrote that all the creation "was subjected to futility"—it comes to very little, in the end. Mind you, not just when the rains go on and on, damaging property, ruining the crops, washing away homes, ending lives. No, these are simply times when the *futility* becomes so manifest that even we become aware of it.

But St. Paul tells us *why* the creation was subjected to futility: "... not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. 8) The *futility* to which the creation has been subjected is linked to the *vanity* of our own labors; sin has worked its ruin, but the glory of God's Work of Salvation in Christ Jesus thus shines through all the more glorious. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The vanity and futility of these things causes the glory of that which the Holy Trinity has accomplished, and continues to do, to shine all the brighter.

What a great gift of the Lord that we are given to partake of God's grace through the Word and Sacraments which He has established for our salvation. We rejoice that we receive those good gifts of God, and rejoice that the Lord continues to send His servants to proclaim them near and far.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Heiser*

From the Deacon

Greetings From The Northland!

Thank you so much for the warm welcome that you provided to us during our visit with you on that last weekend in June! Mariann and I are pleased to be numbered now among the Saints at Salem, and I am doubly blessed also to be counted worthy to be your servant. I am grateful to our Lord Christ—and to you—for the Call that He extended through you to me as your Deacon and Home Mission Pastor. With you, I look forward with great anticipation to all that God will accomplish through this endeavor.

Lord willing, I will be sharing with you much good news about the blessings that God is providing to our missionary work in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Northern Michigan. The initial plan is to establish three preaching stations, in a circuit having an approximate circumference of 400 miles. A midweek service and Bible class is being planned for one place, a Saturday evening service for a second place, and a Sunday morning service and All-Ages Sunday School for the third point. We hope and pray that the Lord would plant three congregations in these three places through the Seed that is sown through these efforts.

I am pleased to report already that the Wisconsin Mission is budding quite nicely. A gracious couple has opened up their home for a weekday evening Bible study. They also have taken the lead in locating a public building in which we can gather for services and our Bible study. Lord willing, we may be able to hold our first service at the Wisconsin Mission later this month!

I currently am making contact with the people who have expressed an interest in the Minnesota Mission, and plan to visit with them in person within the next few weeks.

I have identified four abandoned church buildings that might be available for our use in establishing the Northern Michigan Mission. (Even though a couple of those buildings are on the “wrong side” of the Michigan/Wisconsin border, I am still calling it the Michigan Mission!) I am contacting the current owners of those properties to see whether arrangements can be made to use those buildings for services, and to explore leasing and purchase options.

Your continuing prayers for the mission will be greatly appreciated, for we pray to a God—the One and Only True God—who truly answers our prayers, in accord with His good and gracious will.

In His Service, and Yours,
Deacon Jeffrey A. Ahonen
PO Box 91
Montreal, Wisconsin 54550
(715) 403-1433
jahonen@mac.com

Schedule for July

1 st	9:30 A.M.	Adult Bible Class/Sunday School
	10:30 A.M.	Divine Service-Communion
	noon	Board of Elders
4 th	10 A.M.	Matins Service
8 th	9:30 A.M.	Adult Bible Class/Sunday School
	10:30 A.M.	Divine Service-Communion
11 th	11 A.M.	Midweek Class—Book of Proverbs
15 th	9:30 A.M.	Adult Bible Class/Sunday School
15 th —19 th		Pastor and Deacon at LC—MS Convention
21 st	8 A.M.	Men's Fellowship breakfast
	9 A.M.	Women's Guild meeting
	9 A.M.	Board of Trustees
22 nd	9:30 A.M.	Adult Bible Class/Sunday School
	10:30 A.M.	Divine Service
	noon	Potluck
	1 P.M.	quarterly voters meeting
29 th	9:30 A.M.	Adult Bible Class/Sunday School
	10:30 A.M.	Matins Service

July Birthdays:

1 st	Michael Degner
5 th	Donna Huse, Sherry Huse
6 th	Tina Schnell
7 th	Donna Monthey
8 th	Kay Watson, Edmond Flores
11 th	Dean Degner, Bobby Huse, Teddy Monthey
13 th	Rachel Kunkel
19 th	Kenneth Kelm
20 th	Justin Picha
23 rd	Rodney Banik, Kyle Bow
24 th	Larry Hackett
30 th	Earlene Huse
31 st	Alvin Ender, Melvin Ender

July Anniversaries:

12 th	Arthur & Esther Reinke
23 rd	David & Tina Bow

Deacon Ahonen's Installation

June 24th was an important day in the life of Salem, and of our young diocese. All of us were very happy that the day for Rev. Ahonen's installation had arrived, and it was made all the more special that Deacon Ahonen's wife, Mariann, was able to be with us for the occasion. The call to serve in home missions is not an easy one, and so all of us are pleased that the Lord of the Church has called our deacon to this endeavor.

The Bible Class learned about several of the mission prospects which are developing in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Now we must wait to see what opportunities the Lord leads us to pursue.

Following Rev. Ahonen's installation as deacon, he lead the service in the General Prayer, and assisted Pastor Heiser in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. It is part of Deacon Ahonen's call to assist in such circumstances, as well as preside at the Divine Service during Pastor Heiser's absences, and as otherwise arranged with the pastor. Deacon Ahonen is scheduled to preach on July 15.

The wonderful potluck was appreciated by the Ahonens, and all who were able to be there. Thank you for such a display of Texas hospitality!

—Pastor Heiser



Rev. Ahonen gave the Adult Bible Class a very informative presentation on his intentions for future mission work.



Deacon Jeffrey and Mariann Ahonen



It was a wonderful potluck!

LETTERS OF GREETINGS UPON THE INSTALLATION OF DEACON AHONEN

Rev Ahonen,

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ richly bless you in your calling as you begin home mission work in Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as assisting Bishop Heiser with his duties at Salem and with his duties as Superintendent of Eldona. May you always be strengthened to rely solely upon the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, both in your own life, as you are enabled to hold to the truth, as well as in all that you preach and teach.

Pastor Donald R. Hunter

St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church UAC

PO Box 535

Taylorsville, NC 28681

Dear Brother Ahonen,

It is indeed a joy to send you our prayers and best wishes for the beginning of your new ministry, as well as our sincere regrets at not being able to share them with you personally.

Your call, like the Diocese of which we are all a part, involves large amounts of territory and small numbers of people, which will doubtless make your task seem daunting and even unfruitful at times. It is thus highly appropriate that you are being installed on the day when many church calendars celebrate the Nativity of John the Baptist. His also could easily be viewed as a frustrating undertaking, to be merely the forerunner to another's far more celebrated career, to remain alone in the desert when others enjoyed crowds and disciples in the cities and towns, and to receive only a wicked king's sword as his compensation. Yet this is the mark of the true ministry, to share the frustrations and oppressions of our fellow humans rather than the temporary successes of their oppressors. For our Lord also shared these same frustrations and oppressions, by suffering at the hands of the same wicked king who murdered his predecessor and by joining us all in the far more dreary desert of death. May your work be surrounded by the same outward and temporary appearance of failure and death, that it may bear much fruit to life eternal (John 12:24-25)!

Godspeed,

Your brothers and sisters at

St. Laurence Evangelical Lutheran Church

San Lorenzo, California

Michael R. Totten, Pastor

Dear brother Jeffrey,

On the occasion of your installation as Deacon of Salem Lutheran Church of Malone TX, it is my pleasure to extend to you my greetings and prayers, along with those of The Augustana Ministerium. May our gracious Lord Jesus use well the gifts that He has given you for service in the Office of the Holy Ministry!

Cordially in Him,

Rev. Robert W. Schaibley, Superintendent,
The Augustana Ministerium

—
Rev. Robert W. Schaibley, Pastor
Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church
Colorado Springs CO

Dear Bishop James Heiser, Deacon Jeffrey Ahonen, and all of the saints gathered at Salem Lutheran Church, many of whom are personally known and dear to me:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior!

I rejoice with you that the Lord has led Pastor Ahonen to receive this call to serve as a Deacon/Church-Planting-Missionary in behalf of Salem Lutheran Church to regions far north of here. It has been my privilege to know Pastor Ahonen for some time. Certainly the Missouri Synod's loss has been ELDoNA's gain in this matter! Pastor Ahonen is a man in whom are combined the traits of warm gentleness in dealing with people, and unflinching faithfulness in upholding the the teachings of Holy Scripture as expressed in our Lutheran Confessions. This combination of gifts is one I greatly admire, and wish to emulate. I have every confidence that the Lord will have great use of him in the church planting work he is now called to do.

Pastor Ahonen, the Lord grant you diligence in your calling.

Pastor Heiser, the Lord grant you wisdom in the counsel with which you encourage Pastor Ahonen.

Beloved people of Salem Lutheran Church, the Lord grant you, according to your abilities, to be generous in the support of the faithful work of both your Pastor and also Pastor Ahonen. I beg of you please to remember all Pastors who desire to carry out their ministries according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, for these are indeed trying days for all of us, and the prayers of the faithful are a great encouragement to us.

Pastor Ahonen, if I may be so bold as to mix the language of the church with more common vernacular: Go in peace, and stay in touch. Your friendship, and that of your Bishop, has meant much to me over the years. My prayers go with you.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Heimbigner
Charity Lutheran Church
1101 S.W. Wilshire Blvd.
Burleson, Texas 76028

Pre-evaluation of 2007 Synodical Convention

Pastor Michael Henson
Trinity Lutheran Church (Herrin, IL)

(Note: I've included the following from Pastor Henson's congregational newsletter. Some of you may remember Pastor Henson from his attendance at our Colloquium last Summer—he will also be speaking at this year's meeting in late August, where he will be delivering a post-Convention analysis.—Pastor Heiser)

The 2007 Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod(LCMS) will be held July 14-19, 2007 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. The Synodical Convention is made up of one layman and one pastor elected from each circuit of 7 to 20 congregations. The Convention meets every three years. The Synod meeting in convention determines the official public profession of the LCMS. In between conventions, those who are the elected officials run the Missouri Synod.

Decisions and actions by elected officials and elected and appointed commissions following the 2001 Convention were contrary to the Scriptures and the Confessions. Our congregation spoke up against these decisions and actions, but needed to wait until 2004 to see how the Synod would respond. The 2004 LCMS Convention did not discipline or correct those errors; instead the LCMS changed her historic public profession to include these new false teachings. Following the 2004 Convention on January 9, 2005, Trinity Lutheran Church entered a State of Confession in order to bear witness to these errors and not commune with error. Since that time we have been following the Synodically-mandated three-step Dissent Process in order to correct these false teachings. The Synod's response to our dissent will be seen in the actions of the July 2007 Convention in Houston. If the Synod returns to her former Scriptural and Confessional position, we will drop our State of Confession. If the Synod does not, then we will vote to sever our association with the heterodox LCMS.

As I mentioned in the April 2007 newsletter, there have been some indications as to the expected future outcome of

the Synod in July. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations(CTCR) has issued a report entitled, "CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004-2006)," as well as reports on "*In Status Confessionis*," "Public Rebuke of Public Sin," and "The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices." In looking at the public reports and response of officials in the LCMS, I made it clear that we ought to be prepared to leave the LCMS, because I had seen no indication that there would be a positive response to even one of our six points. With this newsletter article, I offer my final report before I go to Houston in order to witness the proceedings. On Sunday, July 22, I will report to you the outcome of the 2007 LCMS Convention.

Before I can give you my pre-evaluation, we will need a short lesson in our LCMS church governance. Congregations and certain boards within the Synod are allowed to submit overtures to the Synodical Convention. We passed a series of ten overtures on January 31, 2007. The Synod as a whole submitted 271 overtures. These overtures along with Synodical reports are printed in a book called the "Convention Workbook" and sent out to every congregation. The Synodical President appoints members to ten floor committees. These floor committees examine the overtures. Through combining, rewriting and declining, the floor committees present somewhere around 90 resolutions to the convention floor for action. Due to time constraints, not all of those 90 make it to a vote, but of those that do, usually over 90% of those proposed resolutions pass. Those proposed resolutions are printed in the first edition of Today's Business and mailed out to every congregation. By looking at the submitted overtures in the Convention Workbook and then examining the proposed resolutions of the floor Committees, we can get a pretty good idea of the agenda for the upcoming Convention.

Our congregation's dissent lists six points in which the LCMS is teaching and/or tolerating falsehood. The first point is that although the synod's official position on paper is **closed communion**, "widespread open communion practices are not

disciplined.” We submitted an overture asking that the District Presidents visit each congregation in their District to assess whether closed communion is being practiced. Our District submitted a similar overture(3-46), which also asked that “extraordinary situations and circumstances” be discussed and defined.

Floor Committee #3 declined to consider(See Res 3-13, line 13-14) our overture(also sent in by the Southern Illinois District(SID) and Greater Egypt Circuit Forum) because they said that the duty of District Presidents to visit congregations was already included in the bylaws. Our response: If District Presidents were doing their job, then we wouldn’t have the practice of open communion practiced by many congregations. By passing Res. 3-13 (dismissing our concern), widespread open communion practices will not be addressed.

A related resolution(3-09), “To Address Administration of the Lord’s Supper” commends a 1999 CTCR document for study and asks the CTCR to prepare practical guidelines for responsible pastoral care in administering Lord’s Supper. There were 12 overtures which address the topic of the proper administration of the Lord’s Supper. This resolution asks only for more study, but does not address our concern for practicing the correct doctrine. We do not need more study, we need to practice the doctrine we have.

The second point of our dissent is that “the widespread use of revivalistic ‘**Contemporary Worship**’ is not disciplined.” We submitted an overture asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Resolution 2-04, which directed the Commission on Worship to “initiate a process leading toward the development of diverse worship materials.” This overture was rejected by the Synodical President and was not printed in the workbook at all. The Synodical President claims, “This overture contains information that is materially in error and is an apparent misrepresentation of truth and character.” Though the Synod didn’t see it, the overture was given to the floor committee, along with the President’s comments. Included in the workbook were 5 overtures supporting and encouraging contemporary worship

and 3 overtures asking for study of “our theology of worship.” The SID Board of Directors resubmitted their overture(which was also rejected by the President) with changes and it was printed as a late overture(L2-26).

Floor Committee #2 has proposed two overtures. Resolution 2-01 asks that the Commission of Worship(COW) and the CTCR organize a theological conference on worship and asks that Bible studies be prepared for use. Resolution 2-02 asks the COW to develop “diverse worship resources,” provide conferences to educate and build on the diverse worship that already exists, and develop a network of LCMS contemporary composers. In other words, the very opposite of what we desired is proposed.

The third point of our dissent is that the “renunciation of **unionism and syncretism** of every description,” is no longer practiced or disciplined. We submitted overture 3-17 asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Res. 3-06A and 2001 Res. 3-07A, because they did not unambiguously renounce syncretism and unionism. We also asked for guidelines to be produced that would rule out any repetition of LCMS participation in syncretism and unionism in the future. 2001 Res. 3-07A was used to give approval for LCMS participation in government-sponsored events. 2004 Res. 3-06A denied the possibility of unionism and syncretism for serial prayers in which clergy take turns. Our district submitted a similar overture(3-20), which asked the synod to recognize that 2004 Res. 3-06A and 2001 Res. 3-07A was ambiguous and asked the Council of District Presidents with others to produce new guidelines.

Floor Committee #3 has proposed two overtures. Resolution 3-04 resolves “that there is no salvation apart from Jesus and that it is impossible to worship the one true God properly apart from saving faith in Jesus Christ” and it resolves that the CTCR study “the natural knowledge of God” and its implications for our public witness. One of District President Benke’s justification for his participation at Yankee Stadium was based on the natural knowledge of God, that Muslims also worship God, but improperly. Resolution 3-05 resolves that the CTCR provide “further guidance for participation in civic events

that includes the offering of serial prayer.” Although the first part of Res. 3-04 sounds promising, the adjective “properly” allows a loophole which Benke’s opinion concerning “the natural knowledge of God” will use as an excuse for more syncretism and unionism. We declared that serial prayer is wrong, if passed, Res. 3-5 is going to provide guidelines in which serial prayer is allowed.

The fourth point of our dissent is that “the unscriptural office of ‘**lay minister**’ is not being removed, but recognized, affirmed, and encouraged.” We submitted an overture asking that 1989 Res 3-05B, which established licensed lay deacons, and 2004 Res. 5-09, which affirmed District programs that equip laity for ministry, be rescinded. The Southern Illinois District submitted a similar overture(3-55) to rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B and direct all district programs following 2004 Res. 5-09 keep a clear distinction between the service of laity and pastors.

Floor Committee #5 has proposed two resolutions. Resolution 5-02 (and the almost identical resolution from committee #3 Res. 3-12) asks the Board for Pastoral Care and the Council of District Presidents to study the current situations served by lay deacons to determine if there is still a need for lay deacons and report in 2010. Simply put, the unscriptural office established in 1989 is being studied for another three years—not to determine if it is Scriptural or not, simply whether we still need it.

Resolution 5-01 establishes the Specific Ministry Pastoral Program(SMPP), a new alternate route program to bring men into Word and Sacrament ministry. Applicants would be given a minimal level of preparation, and then would be ordained. After ordination, they would take the remainder of their SMPP curriculum. These men would be restricted to a specific “ministry” under the supervision of a general ministry pastor and the District President. There are many practical problem with this proposal, including whether the SMPP Pastor is “apt to teach” after only 5 required seminary-level theological courses before ordination and 5 seminary-level theological courses after ordination. Nevertheless, this program does

include a call and ordination, unlike the present lay ministers. Most important though is that the present proposal (Res 5-01) does not do away with the present lay ministers or the District programs that are producing them. Concordia Seminary St. Louis submitted a similar overture(5-03) to Resolution 5-01, but their proposal included a resolve to do away with the lay ministers created under 1989 Res. 3-05B. It is too bad that Committee #5 didn't choose this proposal. As it is, the present proposals do nothing to address the unscriptural office of lay minister.

The fifth point of our dissent is that “the ‘**order of creation**’ (that a woman is not “to have authority over a man,” 1 Timothy 2:12), has been removed in order to allow a woman to serve as elder and congregational chairman.” We submitted an overture to reject the unapproved 1994 CTCR report, “The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices,” to rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A, which affirmed the conclusions of the same unapproved 1994 CTCR report, and to direct the LCMS to apply the Scriptural teaching on the Order Creation to both the pastoral office and all humanly established offices. The SID sent a similar overture(3-76), which also asked that the CTCR complete the 1995 (Res. 3-10) convention directive to prepare a complete study of the scriptural relationship of man and woman.

In response, Floor Committee #3 proposed Resolution 3-07, which commends the Synod to study Section 3 of the “CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004-2006)” and asks the Synod to wait until 2008 when the CTCR will issue its comprehensive report. Section 3 of the first report states, “the Synod has concluded in 2004 Res. 3-08A that women may hold all humanly instituted offices in the church because we have no ‘thus says the Lord’ about the order of creation for service in these offices.” If passed, this proposed resolution would confirm that the Synod no longer applies the order of creation to humanly established offices.

The sixth point of our dissent is that “**Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution** now allows human

councils to overrule the Word of God.” We submitted several overtures to address some of the problems.

—We submitted overture 8-26 asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Res. 8-01A, which changed the Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution Process. The SID submitted overture 8-20 to modify 2004 Res. 8-01A to require an appeals process for the accused and remove the requirement for a face-to-face meeting. In response, Committee #7 proposed Resolution 7-09, which “reaffirms the use of Synod’s system of dispute resolution for the exclusive and final remedy for those in disputes” and condemns “the use of secular remedies, such as lawsuits.” It should be noted that Committee #8 has proposed that there be a special task force to study the composition of hearing panels for the Dispute Resolution Process and report in 2010. We expressed concern about the composition of hearing panels in our overture 8-26. However, committee #8 has also proposed Resolution 8-05 in which it “affirms the importance of face-to-face meetings” and encouraged the study of the CTCR document “Public Rebuke of Public Sin.”

—We submitted an overture to rescind 2004 Res. 7-02A, which amended the synodical articles of incorporation so that the Synodical Board of Directors would not be allowed to overrule the opinions of the Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCM) in between conventions. This overture was rejected by the Synodical President and was not printed in the workbook at all. The Synodical President claims, “This overture contains information that is materially in error and is an apparent misrepresentation of truth and character.” Floor Committee #8 has proposed Resolution 8-01, “To adopt amendments to the Article of Incorporation and Bylaws re Resolution 7-02A” at the recommendation (See LR 8-01) of the 7-02A Committee formed at the request of the 2004 Res. 7-02A, the very resolution we sought to rescind.

—We submitted an overture (8-02) to rescind 2004 Res. 7-21 which sought to amend Article XI F 2 of the Constitution in order to limit the authority of the Board of Directors. Floor

Committee #8 declined to consider it(See Res 8-12, lines 25-28). They said it had an incorrect premise.

—We submitted an overture(7-22) to change bylaw 3.1.6.2c so that instead of the President of the Synod determining which overtures should not be printed in the Workbook because they are materially in error or a misrepresentation of the facts, that power would be given to the Secretary of the Synod. The SID submitted a similar overture(7-21), except the authority was to be given to the Praesidium of the Synod. Floor Committee #7 declined to consider both our overture(See Res 7-13, line 29) and the SID overture(See 7-13, line 26) because “2001 Res. 7-04A is still adequate.” The very reason we submitted these overtures is because we didn’t think it was adequate.

The work of the Floor Committees makes it quite clear that our dissent has made little, if no progress toward calling back our Synod to her formerly true teaching and practice.

KHBR RADIO MINISTRY—If you wish to contribute to the support of the radio outreach, the cost per weekly broadcast is \$30. Such offerings may be placed in the regular Sunday offering—just mark the envelope “radio ministry” (checks should be made to Salem Lutheran Church).



Men’s Fellowship and Women’s Guild

The next meetings for the Men’s Fellowship and the Women’s Guild will be the morning of Saturday, July 21. Breakfast is at 8 followed by devotions and meetings. All are welcome to have breakfast and stay for meetings.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VBS has been moved! The new dates for this year’s VBS shall be Sunday, August 5 through Sunday, August 9. Each evening will start at 6:30 and end at 8:30. A snack will be provided each evening and our final evening will be a light dinner. Parents are welcome each evening and especially for our final evening.