

Zion Lutheran Church

May Newsletter



Pastoral Points

From Pastor Hauptmeier

The following article was written by Jake Damec for Issues Etc. Journal, the Wittenberg Trail

From the Battlefield to Christ's Altar My Journey to Confessional Lutheranism

I wasn't looking for it when it found me. I never expected it would find me in the most unlikely of places—a war. Yet somehow, for some reason known only to Him, God tied my journey to confessional Lutheranism to the Afghan War.

Growing up, I didn't know anything about Lutheranism. I never heard the name, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The extent of my knowledge regarding Lutheranism was that my father had been raised Lutheran, and that Martin Luther nailed 95 theses on a church door, and thus was the father of Protestantism. I naively assumed that Lutherans believed the same as all Protestants: that baptism was an act we did in order to dedicate our lives to Christ; that communion was simply bread and grape juice, not the true body and blood of Christ (that was something *those* Catholics believed!).

Spending my childhood in the melting pot of Dutch Calvinism and American evangelicalism of west Michigan, my church upbringing was adorned with praise bands and catchy sermon slogans. Rick Warren's *A Purpose Driven Life* was all the rage for my parents' church-life group. Church was a communal activity where we demonstrated our worthiness and uprightness to God. Raising one's hands in praise *proved* your devotion to God—unlike the continually growing numbers of the unchurched in our Midwest enclave.

Yet like many of my fellow Millennials, by the time I reached high school, the catchy slogans,

praise bands, and emotional highs wore off. Soon I found myself sliding into a deistic worldview, marked by the rejection of the historicity of Genesis, and believing that Jesus was more of a wise sage than the incarnate God-man.

By my senior year, however, I found myself walking into the doors of a local mega-church's youth group on the invitation of a friend. I was hooked again on the self-help theology and emotion-bending praise songs. I recommitted my life to Christ, and determined to perfect my life. I felt immensely better with this newfound zeal. I would often remark to myself throughout that year that I was a "pretty good person."

As the son of a veteran of the Panama Invasion and First Gulf War, a child who had spent countless family vacations visiting Civil War battlefields, and with the Afghan War raging as the current administration pledged to withdraw troops, I wasn't going to throw away what I believed would be my once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go to war. So, at 17 years old, I made up my mind, convinced my parents to sign a waiver slip, went down to the local recruiters, and enlisted in the United States Army.

A few short weeks after high school graduation I boarded a plane for Fort Benning, Georgia, setting off on the journey that would transform my life and my worldview, and turn my theology upside down.

The Army, especially the infantry, is a life of roughing it. Any slight show of weakness or softness is quickly trampled by your sergeants or fellow recruits. As weeks turned into months, going from infantry training, to Airborne School, to Ranger selection, I found that my evangelical upbringing was not only foolish but it had no place in a rough profession where one's worth is measured by ruthlessness, cunning, and aggression. The self-help sermons I once enjoyed I now found ridiculous, full of ideas that had no legitimacy in my newfound world. By the time I reached my unit, I had stopped attending church altogether. While still considered a Christian guy at the unit, I knew that American evangelicalism and I had reached a breaking point.

I soon found that beer was a far better use of Saturday nights than going to bed early for a Sunday morning dose of self-help that did not align with the world in which I now found myself living. Yet throughout the weeks, my dad would send text

messages with links to some podcast called Issues, Etc. I didn't bother listening to them with my busy training schedule and the preparations for my first deployment.

Almost a year to the day after I first left home for the army, I boarded a plane for home on pre-deployment leave: two weeks filled with swimming, friends, bonfires and beer—lots of beer. The week before I returned to Georgia my dad suggested that I meet with a pastor friend of his for something he called *confession and absolution*. Himself a combat veteran, he told me it would be good for me *just in case* the worst happened in the coming months.

On an early summer morning I drove into Grand Rapids, passing by the local Reformed seminary, and pulled up in front of an odd, square shaped church. A smiling pastor with stark white hair and dark rimmed glasses cheerfully greeted me as I entered.

We sat down in a small office and introduced ourselves. Over the course of an hour, I told him about my training and the coming deployment. He told me how Christ was *the God-man*, fully God and fully man. I told him that I didn't attend church much these days, but I was still a Christian. The pastor smiled and nodded, and talked about how Jesus had come for sinners, sinners just like me.

We then toured the sanctuary, a square room with low ceilings. The walls were lined with a large panel painting. The pastor explained to me that this painting was the "Te Deum," an ancient Christian hymn sung by Christians for thousands of years. He took me by every panel, carefully explaining how each one confessed something about the Christian faith. We finally ended on a panel featuring an army of angels and a knight trampling an angry demonic-looking figure. The pastor quietly yet firmly noted that this picture represented me, that God used men like me to punish and defend the world from evil-doers. He noted, in fact, that the vocation of soldier was one of the highest vocations to which a Christian could be called.

We walked over to the altar where I knelt, confessing a few sins that had troubled me over the previous year, but nothing special or *that* egregious in my mind. After I ended my quick confession the pastor declared, "In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins." It didn't feel magical. I didn't feel the emotional high to which I had been so long accustomed. I thanked the pastor for meeting and showing me the painting. He told me that he'd keep

praying for me and that he'd send me a care package while I was deployed.

The day before I returned to Georgia my dad gave me two things: a small blue book with a cross inside a heart, and a dilapidated old pamphlet. Dad told me the blue book was Martin Luther's Small Catechism, and the other was a pamphlet talking about the beliefs of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. I read the pamphlet that evening. I liked how the pamphlet talked about Jesus, but more importantly, that it lacked a self-help checklist.

Unbeknownst to me, dad had been quietly attending Wednesday night services for over a year at that same oddly shaped Lutheran church I visited.

Things moved quickly on my return to Georgia. We finished packing our bags with equipment, weapons, and morale items like iPods and Copenhagen. Needing some extra dog tags before departing, I went to the base store to have some made. When the clerk asked me for my religion, I told her, "Lutheran." I figured it would mean something to Dad who seemed enamored by this *Lutheran* stuff.

As I sat in my barracks room finishing packing my rucksack the evening before departing, I noticed the small blue book on my desk. I stuffed it into the rucksack, thinking nothing much of it. The next morning, I reported to the assembly area, boarded a bus to the airfield, and loaded the plane, beginning my first step toward war.

Anyone who has been to war knows that it takes only an instant to sober up. War isn't what Hollywood sells, or any other ill-conceived notion one's imagination contrives. All of war—the pain, the death, the destruction, the long periods of quiet and boredom—are sobering beyond comprehension. The Greek historian Thucydides accurately described war as the "thin veneer of civilization torn away." I began learning firsthand from my front row seat the depths of human depravity. I witnessed this thin veneer pulled away. The notion that all people including myself are good people evaporated within weeks of landing in theater.

When sleeping in between operations, one of the most effective ways to block out the noise of your bunkmates is the music on your iPod. I often would play some of my favorite bands while sleeping, until I discovered that, by some happenstance, three episodes of that podcast dad kept sending me had downloaded on the iPod before I left.

As I prepared to bed down one night, I chose to listen to an episode. The episode was a Sunday

School lesson on Isaiah and the throne room of God. I was taken aback listening to the host and guest as I attempted to sleep. They talked about the cherubim placing the coal on Isaiah's lips as a precursor to something they called sacraments. Isaiah's sins had been absolved because God had declared it to be so. They kept saying that God always used physical means to forgive our sins.

I listened to the next episode the following night. The podcast talked about the Lutheran distinction of the Lord's Supper. I noted that I might very likely have been wrong regarding Communion my entire life. The third episode talked about Baptism, how the flood of Noah was truly a precursor for what Christ does for us in the waters of our own baptisms.

Soon I began reading the small blue book before bed, realizing every time that these Lutherans made a lot of sense. I don't remember how it happened, but at some point, in my bunk I finally concluded that if the flood actually happened, if Genesis was indeed true, then God surely could do such miraculous things in the Sacraments.

My weekly ten-minute phone call home to my dad soon turned into ten minutes of me exclaiming in excitement how Christ had forgiven our sins through these physical means, even while my daily life was marked by death, soul crushing boredom, and bad food.

A package arrived a few weeks later from that same pastor at the oddly shaped church. Besides an assortment of Cliff bars, he had put a book called *The Spirituality of the Cross* inside the package. I devoured the book in my bunk in a short time. I was hooked, slowly realizing that I was becoming or had become a Lutheran.

As I boarded the return plane at the deployment's end, I knew the war had changed me. I would never again see humanity the same, I would never see myself the same. Yet on the other hand, the war had given birth to something else. War with all its horror and power had demonstrated the greater power and work of Christ in the midst of a dying, horrid world. I was a young man who didn't know much other than the depths of the world's brokenness as I boarded a C-17 leaving Afghanistan, but I did know one thing: I was a Lutheran.

After returning from deployment, I began attending the local LCMS church near my base, and was confirmed shortly afterward. In high school I thought the real presence was something silly,

something backward people believed. But two years later I, too, was kneeling at the altar, proclaiming that here indeed was where we meet our Lord in the flesh.

The faith our Lord raised up within me almost a decade ago in Afghanistan is the same faith which guides me today. I wasn't raised Lutheran, but somehow, for some reason, Christ decided to use a war, and iPod, and a podcast to bring me onto the Ark of His Church, confident that "He holds the [battle]field forever."

James Damec is a veteran of the Afghan War, Hillsdale College graduate, political staffer, and member of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hillsdale, Michigan.

The following is an excerpt from the letter written by Sara Nielsen for the Zion Classical Academy April newsletter.

Dear ZCA Families,

As I ponder my thoughts on these last few weeks of the school year, I can't help but express my gratitude that Zion Classical Academy exists. It seems that many members of our society have gone mad. Not only are we facing issues of gender identity, but now some of our local public schools are battling with students identifying as animals! Our faculty and staff have talked in depth about these absurdities, and we can't even fathom these things happening at our school. At ZCA, we will ALWAYS have separate boys' and girls' bathrooms. We will not buy into the "proper pronoun" jargon, we will not teach our students that it is acceptable for biological men to compete in women's sports, and we will certainly never give into students' requests to put litter boxes in our restrooms! As a conservative, classical, Christian school, our parents can be assured that we will teach your children that, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them." -Genesis 1:27. This brings me great comfort as a parent myself. We must fight to get this country's moral compass turned around, and one of the best ways to do that is to raise up well-spoken, loving, wise, and Godly children who are not afraid to stand up for their beliefs and defend God's Word.

Call Committee Report

The call committee put in a request to the Nebraska District president for four or five new pastoral candidates to be considered along with several candidates from our previous list. After several weeks, we received a list of thirteen new candidates. All but one of these have been contacted to determine if they were open to considering another call at this time. The committee decided not to schedule any telephone interviews until after Easter. Now that the call committee members have studied the information provided for each of the candidates, the committee will begin conducting telephone interviews beginning the first week in May. We request your prayers for the Holy Spirit to guide us during these interviews and as we prepare to schedule our next call meeting.

Your Daily Lutheran Bible Class...Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in Collinsville, IL and hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken. The web address is issuesetc.org where you can listen live from 3:00 to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. You can also listen to any of the archived programs. You may also download Issues Etc. podcasts to your mobile device. Programs range from Bible studies, hymn studies and of course "Issues" regarding the social and spiritual matters facing Christians in this time and place.



Wisconsin Style Fish Feed
FRIDAY JUNE 17, 2022



Zion Lutheran Church
Performance Center
465 S. Marion Road
Hastings, Nebraska

5:30 TO 7:00 PM

Free will offering

PROCEEDS GO TO
ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Thank You

The Lutheran Women Missionary League (LWML) would like to thank everyone who donated food, their time helping to set-up and clean up after the funeral meal of Tim Ganskow. Your help is always appreciated. Thank You.

Lenten Meals

Thank you also goes out to all who donated their time, set-up and clean-up, preparing food and to all those that come out to eat and donate to our mission funds. Kings Kids, LWML and LLL. Thank you.

Zion Lutheran Altar Guild will be sponsoring their Annual Salad Luncheon on June 3, 2022 from 11:00 am to 1:00 p.m. The Altar Guild is asking any one interested to please bring a salad. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church for you to sign up to donate your favorite salad. Salads should be big enough to feed 15 people. Thank you in advance for your support and come out to eat with your family or friends. Cost will be \$9.00 a plate with dessert and drink included.



Salad Luncheon

Zion Lutheran Church

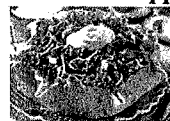


Performance Center

465 S. Marion Road

Friday June 3rd

11:00 am to 1:00 pm



\$ 9.00



May Birthdays



Sarah Kranau	May, 2
Amy Weber	May, 2
Hailey Dack	May, 3
Jeff Ourada	May, 3
Elizabeth Stark	May, 3
Abigail Lyons	May, 4
Brandon Kelley	May, 5
Travis Kelley	May, 6
Susan Ray	May, 7
Tabitha Duden	May, 8
Linda Koepke	May, 9
Ella Brown	May, 12
Hunter Maask	May, 12
Daniel Svoboda	May, 12
Jared Critel	May, 15
Joshua Critel	May, 15
Timothy Hafer	May, 17
Julie Wright	May, 17
Julie Maendele	May, 18
Pasiley Townsend	May, 18
Sage Dasher	May, 19
Brandon Faimon	May, 20
Karen Wilson	May, 20
Jason Kelley	May, 21
Robby Vanorsby	May, 21
Crystal Kosters	May, 22
Larry Struss	May, 25
Mike Fagiolo	May, 26
Danielle Dericks	May, 27
Darrel Joynt	May, 28
Martin Warneke	May, 28
Bo Robinson	May, 29
Laurie George	May, 31

Traci Brittain	May, 8
Terry Kort	May, 9
Amanda Rooker	May, 11
Christopher Rooker	May, 11
Madison St. John	May, 12
Benjamin Hafer	May, 13
Hunter Maask	May, 13
Ronda Roseman	May, 13
Brant George	May, 16
Gabe Gentert	May, 17
Kathy Marble	May, 17
Giavanna McQuesten	May, 17
Joshua Rooker	May, 17
Lilian Rooker	May, 17
Amy Weber	May, 17
Benjamin Kosters	May, 19
Rex Willmore	May, 20
Robby Vanorsby	May, 21
Xzavion Vanorsby	May, 21
Zayde Vanorsby	May, 21
Jaden Smith	May, 22
Jeff Halloran	May, 24
Cody Rials	May, 25
Karen Ganskow	May, 26
Jacob Uden	May, 27
Copeland Carstens	May, 27
Susan Ray	May, 27
Abigail Lyons	May, 28
Donald Fischer	May, 28
Cindy Montague	May,



May Wedding Anniversaries

Robert & Elizabeth Stark	May 5, 1963
Brian & Cheryl Kranau	May 19, 1984
Steve & Vicki Buss	May 24, 1975
Richard & Connie Gerhart	May 29, 1992

May Baptism Birthdays

Gloria Kottwitz	May, 1
Alyxandria Croiser	May, 1
Joshlyn Konen	May, 2
Evelyn Lee	May, 2
Lori Niederklein	May, 5
David Joynt	May, 6

The Holy Baptism of Madden Rose Good
April 9, 2022



SATURDAY NIGHT VIGIL ON APRIL 16TH
USING OUR NEW TV IN THE
WEST FELLOWSHIP HALL



ACLEA

Check presented to
Zion Classical Academy
in the amount of
of \$ 90,000 this year
Thanks You to all who Participated
and Donated generously

The Seats were full on Easter.
He is Risen Alleluia.



May 2022

Zion Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service with Communion	2	3	4 8:30 ZCA Chapel with Pastor Eliason	5	6	7 8:00 AM Men's Bible Study/Breakfast 9:00 AM LWML 6:00 PM Worship Service
8 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service	9 10:00 - 3:00 Quilt Tying at Peace Lutheran Church	10	11 8:30 ZCA Chapel with Pastor Micah Gaunt	12 6:00 ZCA Graduation and Awards Night	13 ZCA Last Day of School	14 6:00 PM Worship Service with Communion
15 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service with Communion	16	17 7:00 PM Executive Board Meeting	18	19	20	21 6:00 PM Worship Service
22 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service	23	24	25 7:00 PM Altar Guild Meeting	26	27	28 6:00 PM Worship Service with Communion
29 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service with Communion	30	31			June 3: Altar Guild Salad Lunch in East Fellowship Hall 11:00 to 1:00 PM	