



Faith Matters

July 2022

Pastors' Page



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I have not been able to attend the *Nerd of the Rings* discussion group hosted by Pastor Dave, but it did prompt me to read J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* again. This time, however, I have been concurrently reading a commentary on the books by Fleming Rutledge, a well-known preacher and author. She has immersed herself not only in Tolkien's books, but also his letters and the complex languages and culture of Middle Earth that he created as the foundation for his books.

One point that Rutledge emphasizes in her commentary is that, while Tolkien clearly meant for his books to be Christian narratives, he deliberately omitted any specific Christian language or references. In fact, he criticized his friend and colleague, C.S. Lewis, for making the Christian imagery too explicit in his fantasy books for children, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Instead, Tolkien intended that the narrative itself, the flow and direction of the story, would illustrate Christian truth about life and death, good and evil, God's presence in the world and His direction of individual lives. In her commentary, Rutledge reveals the subtle ways that Tolkien shaped his stories so that God's influence is unmistakable, even though it is never named as such.

Reading these books together has reinforced a basic conviction about the Christian faith that can easily be lost amidst the relativism and materialism of our day. The good news of Jesus is not true because we believe that it is. It is not merely an argument that has convinced us or a hypothesis that appeals to us. It is much more than a hobby for like-minded people.

Rather, we cling to the good news of Jesus because it is true, and not only in a factual way—although it is factually true. (The resurrection of Jesus is one of the best-attested facts in all of ancient history.) Beyond that, Christianity is true to how we experience the world, to our lived reality, to the “stories” that unfold through all the joys and struggles of human life. When opportunities do come to witness explicitly that Christ is Lord, the Gospel is not somehow imposed on human experience in a foreign way, but it is the logical implication of life as we know it in this world.

We all know that Christianity's place in our larger society is becoming ever less prominent, but for that very reason, it is helpful and encouraging to remember that the Gospel of Jesus is true *in and of itself*. Its basic claims about sin,

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salvation and God's providence are verified by the narrative of life as we live it. We can therefore trust implicitly that Jesus is Lord, that His promises are true and that, in fact, "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to" him. (Matthew 28:18)

Grace and peace,
Pastor Scott Grorud



Missions from Jeff Amundson

Mission is a core part of FLC! Have you stopped by and checked out the new Mission Board? Our spotlight on missions takes us to New Hope Mission Society (NHMS). It supports Christians in India who, as many of our mission partners, suffer against real and present persecution and injury. Yet, despite this, the spreading of God's Word continues. NHMS supports a mission center and college in India where outreach ministry is coordinated, and future religious leaders and lay people are



trained. Through these efforts by team in India, with our support and God's great blessings, the number of house churches and baptized converts continues to grow. As God commanded us in Matthew 28, we are to make disciples of all nations. By



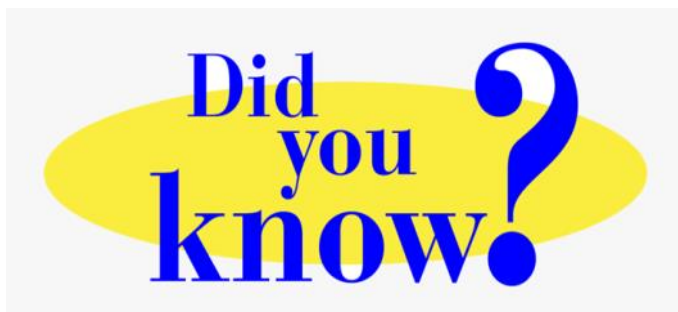
God's grace and strength, we with our mission partners, are part of the mission outreach that makes this a reality. May God be Praised!

Stewardship Matters



One unfortunate development in Christian churches is that the word "stewardship" has too often been portrayed as just a fancy word for giving money to the church. Stewardship does include offerings, of course, but it is much broader and richer than that. A more accurate synonym is "management" and it refers to how we manage our whole lives—time, ability, vocation and money. It also extends beyond life in the church. In addition to our offerings, how do we manage all the rest of our money? In addition to serving in and through the church, how do we manage all the hours in each day and week? In addition to honoring God in worship, how do we honor Him in our families, our work and our citizenship? The word "stewardship" is a comprehensive term that reminds us that we are not people who include some Christian activities in our lives, but we *are* Christians, so that everything we do we do *as* Christians, as our faith informs and shapes all that we are, do and have.

You've probably heard the phrase, "If it ain't broke.... don't fix it." This saying can apply to many situations, but most commonly to issues of change. We don't like change, do we? It feels good to exist in the comfortability, routine, and tradition that we have made for ourselves. In regards to worship, how regular are you with participating in this tradition? Believe it or not, participation in worship wasn't always tradition. At the formation of the liturgical mass (the order of service), the music and language was familiar and biblically based..... i.e. the people knew it! Congregations regularly sang and prayed together much like we do today. However, as the mass developed through the Baroque period, the music became increasingly difficult and the language less vernacular. Soon, it became impossible and sometimes forbidden for congregations to participate in worship. Assemblies became mere spectators of the love and forgiveness of God. What do you think? Next Sunday we sing a 15 minute Kyrie in Austro-Germanic Latin? I don't think so! And it's okay if you don't even know what that means! For this exact reason (and many others), Martin Luther started the movement which reformed the Christian church. The song of God's people could not be restrained! Martin Luther fathered the importance of congregational participation. Worship is for me, for you. Hearing the word of God in your own language and singing the biblical truth in community is vital to the life of a Christian. If it ain't baroque.... let's do it! As cheesy as that sounds, we have a responsibility to make the tradition of worship involvement a regular part of our routine.



Did You Know:

That the more "Google Reviews" that Faith Lutheran gets the higher it moves up in the Google search algorithms? I learned how important this is while visiting with our Vivid Image reps recently. If there is a business that you like/appreciate – like Faith Lutheran Church – it is super helpful to give a review—not just once but ongoing. If you do a Google search of Faith Lutheran Church, you should see information about Faith on the right-hand side of your pages. Scroll down." Give Faith five stars and leave a comment letting us know what you like most about Faith. Thank you for all of the ways that you support Faith Lutheran!





Stump the Pastor

Q: *How are archangels made? Are they created in heaven? Can a mortal be made an archangel?*

A: Angels are not mentioned in the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 but they appear throughout the Bible in a variety of ways:

- In the oldest texts, “the angel of the LORD” is not portrayed as a separate being, but simply God making Himself temporarily visible to humans.
- A similar idea was that angels had no permanent existence, but were sent out to deliver God’s Word and then ceased to exist. This is reflected in Hebrews 1:7 (quoting Psalm 104:4), “Of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.’”
- Other texts think of heaven as God’s royal court and the angels (sometimes called “the sons of God”) are the courtiers and servants of God.
- In the time between the Old and New Testaments, the concept of angels as separate beings, with given names (e.g., Gabriel and Michael) and rankings (“angels and archangels and all the company of heaven”), developed. In all these accounts, the angels are simply “there.” No description of how they came to be exists, but it is clear that they are creatures, made by God to serve God. In the book of Job, the trouble starts when Satan, one of God’s angels, becomes more interested in opposing God than serving Him.

Today, it is commonly claimed that people who die become angels in heaven, but the Bible does not support that. It maintains that angels and humans are different beings. Psalm 8 marvels at the status God has given to mankind, but declares, “You have made them a little lower than the angels.” Hebrews 1, on the other hand, proclaims that Jesus, God’s Son clothed in human flesh, is much greater than the angels, “having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” (Hebrews 1:4) Likewise, the visions of heaven in the book of Revelation make a clear distinction between humans raised from the dead and the angels who populate the halls of heaven.

The short answer to the question is that we do not know how God made archangels or other angels, but it is clear that mortals do not become angels. Instead, as creatures made in God’s image, dignified beyond measure by the incarnate Son, we will dwell in God’s eternal presence as the human beings He originally designed us to be.



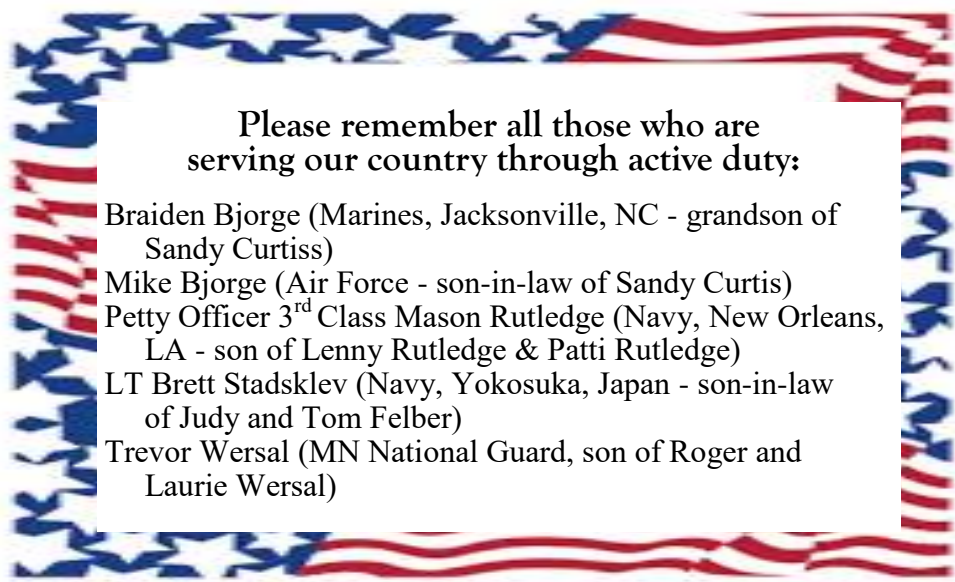
ENDOWMENT FUND

Faith Lutheran’s Endowment Fund was established nearly 30 years ago. The principal of the fund is never spent, while the annual proceeds are dedicated to mission efforts beyond the congregation. They cannot be used for any ongoing expenses of the church. The endowment committee met recently to distribute the proceeds

from 2021. Nearly \$51,000 was available to donate. According to the resolution that established the endowment, 20% of that amount was re-invested in the fund while the other 80% was given to more than 20 local, regional and global missions.

One annual program funded by the endowment is scholarships for high school and college students from Faith. This year, awards were made to all six students who applied. The family of Dave and Betty Jensen chose Kyla Struck to receive a special scholarship funded by them. The other five scholarships went to Kylee Beilke, Kasidy Brecht, Brady Jensen, Hayden Jensen and Wyatt Reece. Congratulations to them and our prayers for God’s blessing on their education!

Please Remember in Prayer



Please remember all those who are serving our country through active duty:

Braiden Bjorge (Marines, Jacksonville, NC - grandson of Sandy Curtiss)
 Mike Bjorge (Air Force - son-in-law of Sandy Curtis)
 Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Rutledge (Navy, New Orleans, LA - son of Lenny Rutledge & Patti Rutledge)
 LT Brett Stadskev (Navy, Yokosuka, Japan - son-in-law of Judy and Tom Felber)
 Trevor Wersal (MN National Guard, son of Roger and Laurie Wersal)



Remember our Faith members in nursing homes and health care centers:

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OUR MISSION IS:

BUILDING FAITH

*"EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY,
FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST"*

EPHESIANS 4:12

TO LIVE OUT THAT MISSION, GOD CALLS US TO:

FOLLOW JESUS

ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL

INVITE ALL PEOPLE

TEACH CHRISTIAN TRUTH

HELP ALL WHO ARE IN NEED

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