Spirit of the Redeemer

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, NASHVILLE, TENN.

September 2024

A Christian Nation?

The question of whether the United States was founded as a Christian nation is sure to be raised again now that the new pejorative label "Christian Nationalism" is being thrown around. As if there is a large segment of Christians arguing for a theocracy! To be prepared, though, the way that people cast doubt on any Christian founding usually goes something like this: "The Declaration of Independence is not the Constitution which does not mention God. Furthermore, the Declaration only mentions or alludes to God four times. How then can you say our nation was or is Christian? It has never been Christian."

Such thinking would invite the bizarre conclusion that after fighting a bitter war of independence with the bloody feet of patriots staining the snow red in Valley Forge and the providence of God finally resulting in a British surrender at Yorktown, that somehow the surviving Founders and leaders then decided, "A completely secular government and renunciation of God is now the thing for us." This would mean that eleven years after the Declaration, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were of the mind that the Christian religion was to have no influence in the new government and nation that were to be established. James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, called the Declaration, along with its religious wording, "the fundamental Act of Union of these States" (https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/04-03-02-0470; Matthew Spalding, *The Declaration of Independence & The Constitution of the United States,* The Heritage Foundation.)

The Declaration was not abandoned but embraced in forming the Constitution. The chief author of the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson, would become the third president of the United States, even as his Deist beliefs with an acknowledgment of God were not Christian.

What's striking about the Declaration is that the final paragraph reads as a kind of prayer and oath:

> We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States. . . . And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

There is also the matter of the state constitutions. Though the United States Constitution contains only the statement in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," yet the states did establish or support religion. In fact, many of the thirteen colonies had official state religions, which were Christian denominations. And even some of the colonies that did not have official religions had Christian statements or requirements for

office. Thus a reason, with the many state preferences, that the U.S. Constitution did not favor a certain denomination.

The first Delaware state constitution of 1776 is of note with its Christian requirement for holding office:

> Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust, before taking his seat, or entering upon the execution of his office, shall take the following oath, or affirmation, if conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath, to wit:
>
> "I _____ will bear true allegiance to the Delaware State, submit to its constitution and laws, and do no act wittingly whereby the freedom thereof may be prejudiced."
>
> And also make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit:
>
> "I _____ do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration" (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/de02.asp).

For the Nation

Almighty God, You have given us this good land as our heritage. Grant that we remember Your generosity and constantly do Your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Grant that we, who came from many nations with many different languages, may become a united people. Support us in defending our liberties, and give those to whom we have entrusted the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, may our hearts be thankful, and in troubled times do not let our trust in You fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book p.453

The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 began with an article affirming all men being born free with unalienable rights, and included the following Christian requirement for office:

> Any person chosen governor, lieutenant-governor, councilor, senator, or representative, and accepting the trust, shall, before he proceed to execute the duties of his place or office, make and subscribe the following declaration, viz:
>
> "I _____ do declare that I believe the Christian religion, and have a firm persuasion of its truth (https://www.consource.org/document/constitution-of-massachusetts-1780-10-25/).

The first New York state constitution of 1777 included the entire Declaration of Independence in its whereas statements and justification for its establishment! (https://history.nycourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Publications_1777-NY-Constitution-compressed.pdf).

The first state constitution of Tennessee from 1796, well after the writing of the U.S. Constitution, acknowledged God while not establishing a religion:

> That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any minister against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case

> whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given, by law, to any religious establishment or mode of worship.

Tennessee also had the prohibition of clergy holding office, which was shared by other states as well:

> Whereas ministers of the Gospel are by their profession, dedicated to God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions; therefore, no minister of the Gospel, or priest of any denomination whatever, shall be eligible to a seat in either House of the Legislature (https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/pub/blue_book/05-06/46-tnconst.pdf).

Note, though, the acknowledgment of the importance of the Christian Gospel and religion. (Interestingly, Tennessee's ban on clergy holding office was removed by voters in 2022 with the passage of Amendment 4. Evidently, Tennessee's clergy ban was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1978, and the amendment process in 2022 was to rectify the language in the state constitution.)

As far as the content of both the Declaration and United States Constitution, the Torah of God is reflected in the ideals and laws, most especially what is written in Leviticus 19: "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor" (Lev. 19:15). This is the foundation of equality of men and a blind justice system. And these are Christian (and Jewish) tenets!

The foundation of our nation, then, was, at least in part, upon Christian beliefs, that is, rights granted from God, not the state, and Christian morality. The Constitution protected these rights and the dignity of man. "The monumental exception, or course, was slavery – recognized by the letter of the Constitution, condemned by the words of the Declaration – which eventually required a civil war to right" (Matthew Spalding, *The Declaration of Independence & The Constitution of the United States*, The Heritage Foundation).

John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other" (https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-3102). This is typical of the Founders recognizing and acknowledging the value of Christian morality if not the Gospel itself. Thus, the debate may be held on whether the current, secular government, with only vestiges of Christianity, is to be preferred. But what is not up for debate is whether the United States, a nation of many states professing Christian principles, had a Christian founding. It most certainly did in a large measure, while, of course, not being a theocracy or intolerant of other religions.

Lutherans can certainly weigh in on this debate with the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, Sacred and Secular. Thus, we are not for state religion either. But both kingdoms are under God, and an acknowledgement of the true God by the government with the natural law, if not the revealed law, being upheld is a great blessing. A nation that promotes the laws of God and the dignity and rights of man made in the image of God makes for a peaceful and prosperous people.

The Founders recognized the laws and morality of the Christian God, the Creator, Nature's God, the Supreme Judge of the world, Divine Providence, though, sadly, not all agreed on the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the nature of the Gospel itself. Several of the states overtly acknowledged or promoted the Christian religion. Only God knows if the people of our generation will turn back to that solid, civil foundation or deny, and memory hole, that there was ever any Christian bedrock to this "more perfect Union."

– Pastor Young

JUNE 2024 MONTHLY KUSAAL LUTHERAN MISSION NEWS AND PRAYER NEEDS

June 2024 No. 165

"As long as it is day, we must work the works of Him who sent me, night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

Greetings: Greetings from your brothers and sisters in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Although the rains are not quite regular, crops are being planted and are doing quite well.

Baptism: Eight people were baptized, five babies in Immanuel and three others in Ebenezer Lutheran Churches.

Confirmation: Rev. Maslin Atubiga confirmed two women in St. Luke Lutheran Church.

Baakanga Lutheran Church: This is the 14th Lutheran Church in the Upper East Region. Thanks be to God, Rev. Asaana and Pastor Michael Akparibo are actively leading this church on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in various activities. The place of meetings and service is a big challenge and the need for a chapel is important. The chief of the community has offered us a piece of land which we hope to build a chapel on it. More than 300 cement blocks have already been moulded for the chapel building. On July 7, the Church will elect interim leaders (Chairman, Secretary and treasurer).

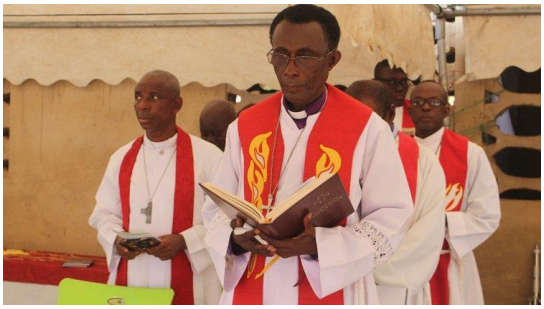
Leadership training class: The monthly leadership class equips the lay leaders to preach, teach and lead the various churches.

Evangelism/Outreach: The following are the newly elected members of Evangelism/Outreach team: Jacob Akudugu, Pastor Michael Akparibo, Cynthia Akudugu and Moses Akidaug. They have been charged to carry out house to house evangelism in various communities every month. Thanks be to God for the support received for logistics.

Weekly Radio Broadcast Program: The weekly radio broadcast took place at MAXX FM Radio Station only. The Source FM Radio Station is temporarily closed down. We praise the Lord for the sponsorship of the radio program by Ghana Harvest over the years.

Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF): Translations of Luther's Large Catechism, the Book of Concord and Lutheranism 101 are going on in six Ghanaian languages. LHF is printing the Ewe version of A Child's Garden of Bible Stories in Ghana. Plans are also on the way to have Kusaal God's Word For You and Fante Augsburg Confession printed soon.

Retirement service for Nicholas: By the grace of God, Partial retirement service was held for Pastor Nicholas Salifu on June 2, 2024. Nicholas began to serve as lay leader in 1985 in Tema, where the Lord used him to start a Church in Nungua, near Accra. The partial retirement will enable Pastor Salifu to assist Rev. Joseph Asaana, to take over from him. Meanwhile Pastor Salifu will continue to teach, preach, visit, nurture and carry out the translation of the Book of Concord and other good Lutheran books.



Concordia Preparatory School (CPS): CPS and twenty other schools in the district took part in Maths and Science quiz. In the end CPS emerged second best. CPS has enrolment of 1,300, its challenge is adequate classrooms for the students. The school is located in a safe environment which is conducive for teaching and learning.

Disruption in the Church (ELCG): Four pastors and two laymen have taken the ELCG to civil court. Their claim was the process for the election was flawed and the President Elect is not qualified to contest. The first appearance was on June 6, the second on June 26 and the third is coming off on July 18. The term of office for the current trustees ends June 30th. This means as from now there is no leadership for the ELCG. We thank God, all church programs and activities are going on smoothly. Please join us to pray for amicable solution of the problems in the Church.

Thanksgiving and Prayer Needs:

1. We praise the Lord for all the various kinds of support received from Ghana Harvest, churches, individuals and friends for the various supports received.
2. Praise the Lord for the growth of Baakanga Lutheran Church. Pray that on July 7, dedicated people are elected to be interim leaders.
3. Praise the Lord for the textbooks and metal desks received by CPS.
4. Pray that we get assistance in the construction of a chapel for the new church in Baakanga.
5. Pray that the Lord blesses us with funds to purchase means of transport for the two new pastors (Michael and John).
6. Pray that we get funds to complete work on CPS two classrooms.
7. Pray that the Lord softens the hearts of the four pastors and two laymen who have taken the ELCG to court.
8. Pray that the ELCG court issues are resolved soon.
9. We thank and praise the Lord for your active participation and support in the Ghana mission and ministry with your prayers, encouragement and monetary gifts.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? (1 John 3:16-17)

Pastor Nicholas Salifu

Birthdays, Baptismal Birthdays, & Wedding Anniversaries

Birthdays

Baptismal Birthdays

Wedding Anniversaries

A Visit to our Workers in Prague

During the first week of July this year, I was in Prague (Czech Republic) to attend and speak at a biennial scientific meeting in my field. I attended Bible class and the Divine Service at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel there. This is a ministry our congregation supports, through Pastor Dale Kaster (and his wife Sue). I had been there once several years ago, and I decided to tell you about it and include some photos I took (sorry, only I-Phone jobs).

The building (mixed Romanesque/Gothic stye) is old, built in the 14th Century. The reformer Jan Hus held mass there, when he was still a priest (at least that was indicated in Wikipedia). (He predated Luther by a century and was burned at the stake by the Council of Konstanz in 1415, and people warned Luther that the Pope might well do that to him if he could.) The building is in good repair, as far as I could tell. I think the seating area is smaller than that of our church—there were about 30 people there that Sunday.

The system is complicated, so bear with me. The building is owned by a Slovak congregation, who holds an earlier service each Sunday. Pastor Kaster serves an English-speaking congregation there, with the Divine Service at 11 AM (Bible class before then). They rent from the Slovaks. There is an evening Czech service. (Rev. Kaster does not speak Czech or Slovak, which have a lot of similarity to each other but are not identical. Both seem hard to learn, at least to Rev. Kaster and me.)

The history of Central Europe is complicated but is relevant here. (A good book on this is *The Middle Kingdoms,* by Martyn Rady, if you are interested.) Prague is in the region called Bohemia, which sometimes had kings or other royalty and was long a part of the Holy Roman Empire and Austria-Hungary. The establishment of the nation Czechoslovakia happened after World War I, created as an artificial nation of Czechs, Slovaks, and Moravians. It disappeared in World War II (occupied by Germany in 1939), then it came to life again after that but was soon controlled by Communists and under the domination of the Soviet Union. It was freed from their control in 1989 and then split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1992. So, Prague is in the Czech Republic (sometimes referred to as Czechia). (I have been to Prague eight times since 1991, and it has really changed since then.)

Historically Slovaks had had more of a Lutheran heritage than Czechs, and we still have a (non-geographic) Slovak District in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, here in the US. A former member of our congregation, George Mesiarik, was born there. There are Slovaks living in the Czech Republic, for a number of reasons.

Evangelism in the Czech Republic is not easy. Over the centuries, Bohemia had many assaults on its Protestant church. The followers of Jan Hus ("Hussites") fought with the Roman Catholics after his death, and the Catholic Counter-Reformation was very effective there after Luther's time. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) was also a disaster in the region. Partly as a result of these things, people became less interested in religion in general—and then the Communists pushed pure atheism. I have read that 40% of Czechs consider themselves atheists, and most of the rest are marginal Roman Catholics. But there are Lutherans and some other Protestants.

So who is in the congregation at St. Michael's (the English-speaking group)? A mixture of people. I met some Americans posted there for U. S. businesses (a man who has to fly back periodically to St. Louis for his company), expatriates who are there long-term (Sam, an American from Texas, who was teaching English, married a Czech, and stayed, now raising a family), and a young man originally from India

(family living in Dubai), attending medical school in Prague. Also, several people from countries around the world who are more comfortable in English-language services. That Sunday other visitors included an American couple visiting from Chicago, a man from Chad, and a Finnish family on vacation. It was a very mixed group–a glimpse of what Heaven will be for us. Rev. Kaster said that they had infant baptisms in the Divine Service both of the previous two weeks.

It is refreshing to be able to travel to another country, far from home, and use the same hymnal (*Lutheran Service Book*) and liturgy, bonding with other Lutherans. As you can see from the photos, the pulpit is very elevated (old style). They have a pipe organ (also pictured) and an excellent organist, who plays for both the Slavic and English services. They have a crucifix procession, with Patro Kaster and an acolyte. Rev. Kaster had a meaningful Law and Gospel sermon, and Communion is celebrated every week. After the Divine Service, there were some snacks and tea (sorry, no beer, not even in Prague). I note from one of our LCMS publications that the new President of our Ft. Wayne Theological Seminary, Rev. Jon Bruss, preached at St. Michael's in April.

In conclusion, I was glad to have the opportunity to meet and worship with these people. Pastor Kaster regularly posts news in our newsletter, so please read these articles. They are working on evangelism not only in the Czech Republic but also Poland (and some other countries in Eastern Europe). Pray for him and the congregation. If you ever do get there, please visit.

Soli Deo Gloria, Fred G.

Find our newsletters online at:
http://redeemernashville.org/newsletter/

Ascension Lutheran Church

610 W Old Hickory Blvd, Madison TN 37115
(615) 868-2346 | www.ascensionmadison.com

Dear beloved saints at Redeemer,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I want to thank you, both personally and on behalf of Ascension Lutheran Church, for your spirit of giving on behalf of the upcoming Henkel Conference. Your gift is warmly received, and allows the event to proceed with the necessary planning to make it a success.

As we aim to provide a forum of the best theological and cultural speakers within the Christian faith, we thank the Lord who has supplied us through your hands. We must "Fight the good fight of the faith [and] make the good confession" (1 Ti 6:12-13) for the sake of God's name and the good of our neighbors. We pray that this conference will once again be a Spirit-filled means to guarding Christ's own people.

> Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
> Curb those who by deceit or sword
> Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
> And bring to naught all He has done. —LSB 655:1

For those able to attend, we look forward to being your host. For those unable to attend, please know that your kindness will be remembered by name during the conference.

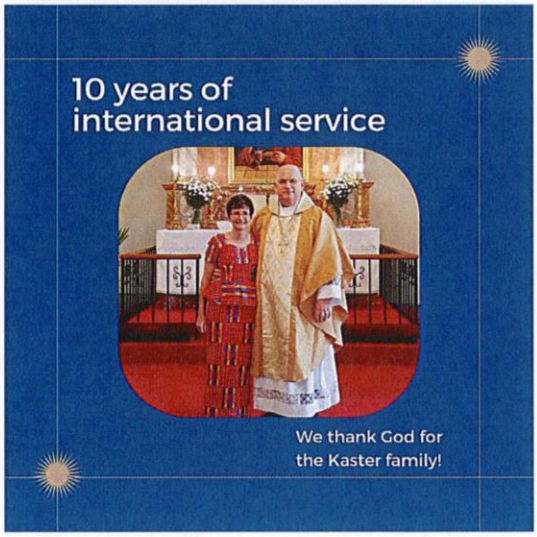
May our Lord bless you richly.

In Christ,

Rev. Gregory D. Bauch

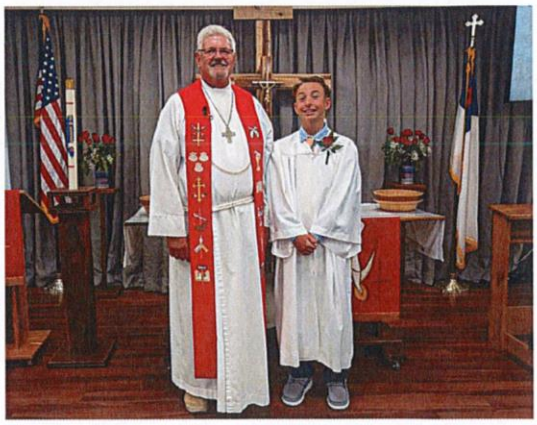
Proclaiming the Praises of Christ in Prague

June 2024



10 Years and Counting!

It all began with a simple request for Dale to teach Hebrew for two years in Kenya. When that did not work out, it morphed into Dale training local men to serve as pastors in their village churches. We also restarted the congregation in Tamale, northern Ghana. After four years of serving there, Dale was called to serve as pastor at St. Michael the Archangel in Prague, the Czech Republic. During our time here, we have seen Martin Damašek ordained as a deacon and later as a pastor. Our congregation has been blessed with three adult baptisms, as well as many adult confirmations into the Lutheran faith. Dale has also been privileged to serve as chaplain for the Eurasia region, a position that seeks to encourage our co-laborers in Christ. And now, we have come to celebrate 10 years on the mission field. It has been a true blessing to us. We have made many friends and celebrated many people brought to the faith. Where do we go from here? Only the Lord knows, but it is our intention to remain here in Prague, serving a congregation filled with God's love.



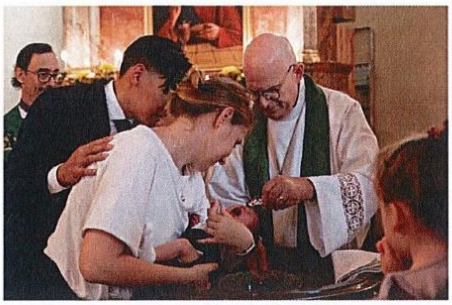
During our time on the field, we have been blessed, as well as challenged, by happenings in the family. We have celebrated two marriages of our three children. And we have received with joy two granddaughters and one grandson. Dale was blessed to perform both marriages and all three baptisms. Both of our mothers have been called to be with Jesus in glory. As you all know, Dale was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a form of blood cancer. We returned to the States for 14 months for treatment, during which time he still actively worked with the church. After achieving remission, we returned to the work in Prague. Thanks be to God he is still in remission. And most recently, our oldest grandchild was confirmed into the Lutheran faith, which we were happy to witness. It has been a full 10 years. But God has seen us through it all and richly blessed us. Perhaps, there is another 10 years in us!

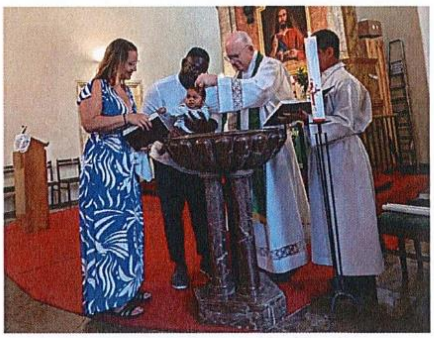
The Feast of Pentecost

The celebration of Pentecost is always of great consequence to the Church. On that day, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit who creates and sustains the Church, gathering it from all nations of the world. But there is something wonderfully beautiful about celebrating Pentecost in an international setting. Our congregation is made up of people from 14 different nations and five continents, with 15 different languages. As is our custom for confessing the creed on that day, we use the Apostles' Creed in each of those languages, with each person confessing it in their heart language. It creates a beautiful cacophony that must sound a lot like that first Pentecost day. We thank the Holy Spirit for calling people out of the darkness of sin and into the light of Christ Jesus. It is always our hope to gain newer people from different countries so that we can add them to our confession each year.

Congregational Outing to Konopiště

One of the great things about living in the Czech Republic is that there are so many things nearby to see, including countless castles. Recently, our congregation had an outing for the day to the castle in Konopiště, which is a short trip southeast of Prague. This castle was the favorite residence of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination in Sarajevo kickstarted World War I. It is a beautiful castle filled with many artifacts, including countless animal trophies that he personally shot from over all the world. Our tour guide said it was ironic, if not fitting, that he himself died by a bullet. ;-) We had a great time of fellowship.





Two Weeks of Baptisms

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down." (Isa. 45:8a NIV) God's rain of righteousness has been seen in our church the last two weeks. On 23 July, we welcomed Benjamin, son of Patrick and Veronika, into the body of Christ. On the following Sunday, 30 June, we were doubly blessed to baptize both Jana and her son, Filip. Even more people into the body of Christ! Baptisms are wonderful moments where we see the birth of a Christian. It is where God literally rains down His righteousness upon us. We pray God to richly bless these new brothers and sister that the faith that has begun in them would be brought to completion on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We bid a sad farewell to the Mock family. For the past year, we have been blessed to have Cody, Aurélie, and their two daughters in our congregation. Cody serves as an IT specialist for the Luther Academy in Riga, Latvia, as well as the Eurasia region. Up to this point, their visas had not come in, so they waited and lived here in Prague. With their visas finally approved, they are off to Riga to do the work for which they came. It is sad to see them go. They are such dear friends. But we look forward to seeing them at regional gatherings. God bless them in their new home.

God bless you and keep you, Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

Witness Always

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To support the LCMS through the work of the Kasters, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod **OR** Mission Central
P.O. Box 66861 40718 Hwy E16
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include "Kaster – Czech Republic," in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/kaster.

September 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Service Door Offering Sunday School & Adult Bible Study Choir	2 6:30 pm AA Labor Day	3	4 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study 5 Confirmation	5	6 6:30 LWML	7
8 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School & Adult Bible Study Choir	9 6:30 pm AA	10	11 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study 5 Confirmation	12	13	14
15 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School & Adult Bible Study Choir	16 6:30 pm AA	17 6:30 Council – Distribution of budget worksheets	18 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study 5 Confirmation	19	20	21 8:30 Men's Breakfast
22 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Service Sunday School & Adult Bible Study Choir	23 6:30 pm AA	24	25 9:45 Matins 10 Bible Study 5 Confirmation	26	27	28
29 St. Michael & All Angels or Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Service LWML Mite Collection Sunday School & Adult Bible Study Choir	30 6:30 pm AA					

Ongoing Prayer Needs

Please update Pastor and the church office on these needs.

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