

## *Letter to the American Church*

Have you ever asked yourself how in the world could the German churches sit back and do nothing when it came to the mistreatment of so many people? I know I have. Eric Metaxas has, too. In fact, after writing a book about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Bonhoeffer, Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy” birthed the book, “Letter to the American Church” also by Eric Metaxas.

Just a little history. In case you don’t know, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor born and raised in Germany. He came from a fairly wealthy, and well-connected family. His father was a psychiatrist. Dietrich was one of eight children. He was a fraternal twin. He and one of his brothers were executed by the Nazis as were two of his brothers-in-law all for standing against Hitler.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw immediately where Hitler was leading the people of Germany and he tried to warn the church through a radio address entitled “The Fuhrer Principle” which was cut off part way through the address. Bonhoeffer was, for all intents and purposes, “cancelled” the way our elites today like to “cancel” people they don’t agree with.

That didn’t stop Bonhoeffer. He took a firm stand against Hitler and his ideology. He worked to open the eyes of the German Church to what was happening right before their very eyes. He worked relentlessly to get people to take a stand. In 1933, there were approximately 18,000 protestant pastors. About one sixth of them signed a document called “The Barman Declaration” which stated that God is the only One to be worshipped and the State cannot assist in running the Church.

Within 2 years, about half of those that signed the Declaration were left to stand strong. Another 3,000 stood firmly with Hitler. That left about 12,000 pastors who decided to sit on the sidelines and watch as the world went by . . . people being sent to death camps.

What does that have to do with you and I? What are you saying to me in the year 2024? The book you have been talking about took place in the 1930s and 40s.

I don’t have to point out all the societal struggles happening in America today. I also don’t have to point out things like Human Trafficking. What about all the kids being confused by all the crazy “fluid sexuality” being fostered on our children – no matter how young or old.

This book is about standing up for what is right. The German Church didn’t have a recent history they could look back on to see what would happen if we allow the government to form a religious vacuum. They didn’t know that millions of people would be murdered at the hands of the Nazis, simply because of their race, religion, because they were helping others. . .

We are going through the book, “Letter to the American Church” in our Adult Bible Study class Sunday mornings at 9:30. We’ll be finished with it May 12<sup>th</sup>, Mother’s Day. The book can be purchased on Amazon. You can pick it up at Mardel. You can go to Letter to the

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American Church and buy it directly from them. I encourage you to read this book. Why? Because we are part of the Church. What is the Church supposed to do? Stand up for the Truth.

Like Pilate, we can ask “What is Truth?” The answer? Jesus Christ and everything He taught; He taught us to care for one another; to love one another; to feed/clothe one another. We all get to go through what our country is going through, but only God’s people will be able to stand against what comes next. The result is in our hands. What are you going to do? How are you going to react/respond?

*First, they came for the socialist.  
I did not speak out  
Because I was not a socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists.  
I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews.  
I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me.  
There was no one left  
To speak for me.*

By Martin Niemöller (1930s)

## *May, 2024 Means Elections*

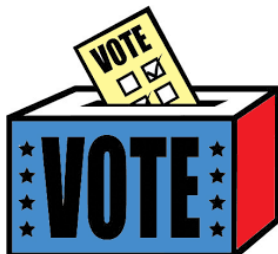
### *At First Lutheran Church*

In May, every even year, First Lutheran Church's voting age members elect the Council Members that will be governing our church for the next two years. The guidelines/qualifications for being a member of the Council are below.

1. The Council Member should not be a recent convert, but one who is experienced in the faith.
2. The Council Member should be one who is regular in attendance at worship and Holy Communion.
3. The Council Member should demonstrate his/her love for the Word of God by his/her personal attendance at Bible Study.
4. The Council Member should be mature in his/her personal attitudes. That does not necessarily imply that he/she is old or older.
5. The Council Member should have a good understanding of the Biblical Lutheran traditions and the reason for them.
6. By accepting a position or office at First Lutheran Church of Oklahoma City, all Council Members, candidates for council, church employees, teachers, and volunteers are indicating their wholehearted agreement with both the letter and the intent of the Church Constitution and By-Laws.

If you notice, there is no mention of being a man or a woman. First Lutheran Church voted to open the Council to women two years ago and Sue Wackerly has served as our first woman Council Member. Congratulations, Sue!

If you or someone you would like to nominate for Council Member, please let either Jim Wackerly, Chuck Gray or Pastor know.



**VOTER'S MEETING:**  
**MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AFTER SERVICE.**

# *Lutherans for Life*

*May, 2024*

**May 5 – Easter VI** – Surprise pregnancy does involve difficulties too great for our abilities. Terminal diagnosis indeed comes with insurmountable obstacles. Taking life-and-death matters into one's own hands only compounds the problems. Instead, trust the Son of God to overcome and deliver out of every threat (1 John 5:4). Cry out to Jesus in repentance and prayer, for the Father above will not fail to supply immediate and eternal salvation (John 15:16).

**May 12 – Easter VII/Mother's Day** – The world ridicules motherhood as hindrance. It complains that children get in the way of education, career, income, gratification, and even climate. But the testimony of God is greater than the testimony of men (1 John 5:9). Real life and full life come in Christ Jesus, His Son, who shows us the joy of loving and keeping every daughter and son the Holy Father gives (John 17:11-12).

**May 19 – Pentecost** – The Holy Spirit means to make a dwelling place of every human body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The Scriptures explicitly apply this mission to old and young, male or female (Acts 2:17), and even the unborn (Psalm 139:13). We have the invitation and commission to proclaim this prophetic message to a culture that beholds some neighbors as lifeless bones (Ezekiel 37:2-3). Let His precious breath of life (Genesis 2:7) inspire us all!

**May 26 – Holy Trinity** – The truth of Father, Son, and Spirit proves that God loves relationship, family, and community. He gives these blessings no matter how young or old (John 3:4-5), even inhabiting the womb or entering the tomb. The One who creates, redeems, and calls every human being reigns as Lord over life and death (Acts 2:36). Abortion and assisted suicide are idolatrous, and Jesus has come to save from it (John 3:17).

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**June 2 – Pentecost II (Proper 4B)** – Abortion and euthanasia aim to avoid disabilities by eliminating the persons who have them. The Christian community, on the other hand, regards persons with disabilities as reasons for rejoicing. Even the most fragile human bodies testify to the goodness of the God who created and sustains them (2 Corinthians 4:7-11). Let us declare and demonstrate how the life of Jesus manifests in every neighbor!

**June 9 – Pentecost III (Proper 5B)** – We believe Almighty God creates human beings in His own image, and so we also speak (2 Corinthians 4:13) against using death as a solution. We believe He redeems each one through His beloved Son, and so we also speak it despite political opposition or popular opinion. We believe He calls them all by His very Spirit, and so we also speak the sanctity of every human life!

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**June 16 – Pentecost IV (Proper 6B)/Father’s Day** – Fathers embody how much difference the little things make. What seems just a personal choice at first quickly affects everyone around with its repercussions. The devil uses privacy and independence as deceptions. But salvation also only starts small (Mark 4:30-32). An embryo soon grows into the Savior of the universe, and one word spoken in courage and compassion changes untold hearts and saves countless lives.

**June 23 – Pentecost V (Proper 7B)** – “Widen your hearts,” the Apostle exhorts his Corinthian companions (2 Corinthians 6:13). He has just instructed them how God’s grace prevails to make life worthwhile without regard to anyone’s size, skills, or circumstances. Doesn’t His love expand our imaginations and affections to receive every human life as a gift and privilege? Won’t our voices offer the same opportunities to neighbors in surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis?

**June 30 – Pentecost VI (Proper 8B)** – “Silence.” “Dust.” “Strikes.” “Insults.” “Grief.” Lamentations knows right where it hurts. And this Word of the Lord gives us a God who comforts just how each needs: “steadfast love,” “mercies,” “faithfulness,” “salvation,” “compassion,” and “abundance.” Let us diagnose abortion by naming its sinfulness, so that we may directly dispense the healing that the hearts it has broken long for.



## Century Chest Items Raffle

**We are raffling off items from the Century Chest.** We have **5 newspapers** from April 22, 1913, for \$5.00 a ticket. We also have **one 1913 nickel and one 1913 penny**. Each of these will be \$1.00 a ticket. **(The value of each of the coins is around \$15.00).** We will have the **drawing on May 19th** in the sanctuary after the voter's meeting. The proceeds will go towards repairing/caulking the basement windows. For more information see Sue Wackerly



## Members who moved

**Vern Fahrni** moved to Kansas City to be closer to his other daughter. At this time, we have no contact information. His Senior Citizen apartment became available rather unexpectedly and he left very quickly just before Easter.

**Carolyn Lewallen** was moved to Tulsa to be closer to her daughter Jennifer. John Lewallen is the contact person for Carolyn.

## Mid-Week Bible Study

The Mid-Week Hebrews Bible study will end May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, depending on if you attend either Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. Pastor will be giving us all a break until after Labor Day when he will pick things back up. Enjoy your summer break.



## From: The Joyful Noiseletter

A man had been shipwrecked on a remote island in the Pacific, and was alone for 20 years. When a ship finally arrived, his rescuers were impressed with the three buildings he had built and asked him about them.

"Well," the man replied, "this is my house, and that building over there is my church. It's a wonderful church and I hate to leave it."

"And what is the third building yonder?" a rescuer asked.

"Oh, that is the church I used to go to," the man replied.

— *via Palmer Stiles*  
*Melbourne, FL*

## May 2024

# Serving the Lord in May

**5** The Heierdings  
**12** The Lees  
**19** The Wackerlys  
**26** The Grays

Communion Deacon:  
**Chuck Gray**  
**Alternate: Bill Heierding**

## Happy Birthday

<b>1</b>	<b>Bill Heierding</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Natilee Burke</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Meghann Dew</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Mike Johnston</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Vern Fahrni</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Melissa Sellars</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>Mike Tucker</b>		



## June, 2024

# Serving the Lord in June

**2** Heierdings  
**9** Wackerlys  
**16** Grays  
**23** Joe Glass  
**30** Heierdings

Communion Deacon  
**Bill Heierding**  
**Alternate: Chuck Gray**

## Happy Birthday

<b>1</b>	<b>Kelly Monroe</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Jessie Ray</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Abbie Johnston</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Naomi Lee</b>				

