



The Sacrament of Holy Communion

When is a person rightly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose. However, that person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words, "for you" require simply a believing heart.

This reminds me of a story that Jesus told in the Gospel of Luke:

"Two men went into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other."

What makes a person worthy? This parable makes it clear that it isn't good performance that makes it happen. On a certain level we Lutherans know that. We've been taught it often enough. But as human beings it really cuts across the grain.

Growing up in Minnesota the Twins winning the World Series in 1987 was a big deal. Up to that point all Minnesota teams were just losers, always losers. But that year meant that we could be winners. A big part of that team was a guy named Bert Blyleven. He was our number two starter behind Frank Viola and really the only

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other starter worth mentioning (the charitable might include Les Straker.) When Bert was pitching you felt like we could win a big game.

Now Blyleven retired shortly after winning that World Series and his name came up for consideration for the Baseball Hall of Fame. And it remained under consideration for 14 years! The question was whether he was worthy or not. He had lots of wins and strikeouts, but he had also lost a ton of games and had a temper that had gotten him in trouble a few times. He'd been a major cog on a World Series team, but had never won a Cy Young award (He finished 3rd once). Was he worthy? Was he good enough?

Sometimes I'll start feeling a little down about how things are going. Am I preaching well enough? I should be getting to more school events. I haven't visited some of the people I've been planning to visit for ages. Am I really very good at being a pastor? Maybe you've experienced this self-doubt in your profession too?

Or maybe you've been in a failing relationship? Or you got into debt and haven't been able to get out? Or you sin in ways that you know are sin and yet you don't have the willpower to just stop it?

The world tells us, or we tell ourselves, in a thousand ways that we are not worthy. People whom you admire look at themselves and feel unworthy.

Communion is a rebuke to all of that. Communion knocks that way of thinking on the head and turns it upside down. The only thing that makes us worthy to receive the gift of communion is knowing that we need it. We are worthy to receive it when our heart says, "Lord, I need you. Thank you that you forgive me."

In the past both Catholics and Protestants have messed this up entirely. We've tried to put the world's filter back on God's Holy Communion. But then it no longer makes any sense. Communion is not for the one who's got it together. It is the gift of God to the failure. It is the promise of God to the weak and ensnared. It says, "Look at me, not yourself. Trust me, not yourself." Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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**Emanuel-St John
Lutheran Church
Council Meeting
Minutes
September 13, 2018**

Vice President Brian Lantz called the meeting to order. Present were Cindy Souder, Kari Lantz, Rhonda Johnson, Dennis Booth, Pauline Lange, Jeff Ellerbrock, Denise Adams, Erin Englin and Pastor Ben. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Dennis Booth, second by Jeff Ellerbrock to approve the August minutes. Motion passed. Treasurer's report was given by Rhonda Johnson. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth to approve the treasurer's report with a balance of \$2520.65. Motion passed. Erin gave a report on EPIC. EPIC students are planning do to two mission projects. Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse and collecting food for the Calhoun and Sac County Outreach Centers. There will be donation boxes at the church for both collections.

Old Business: Mission Festival date and speaker options were discussed. Motion by Rhonda Johnson, second by Kari Lantz to table item for October meeting. Motion passed. Jeff Ellerbrock gave a report on the meeting with Michael Jacobson, Financial Advisor for Western Iowa Synod. There were nine people in attendance. Mr. Jacobson had several good ideas for our church that the Finance Committee will look into. The fence entrance banner for the church cemetery is expected to be in place this next week.

President's Report: Brian Lantz went over a letter from the Sioux Center, Iowa Family Domestic Outreach Center and the Mid-American Electric Company.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Ben and five to six confirmation students are planning on attending the Recharge weekend in Okoboji. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth to have the students pay the \$30.00 non-refundable deposit and the church will pay the remainder of the cost. Motion passed.

Worship and Music Committee: Dennis Booth present. The committee went over the acolyte guidelines and are working on the worship attendants schedule.

Parish Education: Kari Lantz present. Sixty children attended VBS. Next year's VBS will be the last full week in June. Rally Sunday went well, children enjoyed it. A sixth grade teacher is still needed for Sunday School. Committee is starting to work on children's Christmas program.

Outreach Committee: Denise Adams present. Committee is working on Mission Festival. The ELCA Good Gifts will be done again this year during December.

Property and Management Committee: None.

Stewardship and Finance Committee: Jeff Ellerbrock present. He presented the Portico Health Insurance options for Pastor Ben. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Dennis Booth to approve the Bronze Plus A health plan from Portico for the 2019 calendar year for Pastor Ben. Motion passed.

WELCA: Reminder of the Tea Party on Sunday Sept 16.

New Business: None

Motion by Kari Lantz, second by Denise Adams to adjourn. Motion passed.
Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.



TEA PARTY

Sunrise Circle members and friends hosted a ladies' tea party on Sunday, September 16. Approximately 55 females gathered in the church sanctuary. After a brief welcome, Samantha, Ruben and Steffi Potts acted out a humorous children's book called Tea Party Rules.

Following the skit, Faith Worley spoke to the crowd about working her way through bouts of depression, anger, resentment and offering tools to help others. She entitled it "Mothers, be kind to your Daughters".

Activity in the sanctuary concluded with a lively Youtube song called "My Lighthouse".

Everyone migrated to the basement to find beautifully decorated tables with the tea pots, cups/saucers and lots of fanciness arranged by Colleen Arndt and Cindy Souder. Darsi Huddleson crafted cute nut cup favors to look like cups and saucers. The glass luncheon plates were used by all the guests in choosing different breads, fruit, petite cucumber rye sandwiches, apple cake or pecan tassies. Of course the lunch offered a variety of flavored teas, coffee or lemonade. The gathering offered the peace, comfort and friendly conversation of any tea party.



October Birthdays

- 2) Sheila Toms
- 3) Jeff Ellerbrock
- 4) Jean Matter, Jax Purdie
- 5) Ella Adams
- 6) Karen Cerra, David Hutchens
- 8) Cortney Diersen
- 9) **Doneta Linquist**
- 10) Theodore Albright
- 11) Donovan Kennebeck
- 12) Steven McKinney
- 13) Bruce Byriel, Cody Lanning, Cindy Souder
- 14) Michael Sage
- 15) Grant Grodahl
- 16) Nolan Huddleson, Jenna Jensen
- 17) Ron Maulsby, Rodney Rix, **David Sands**, Julie Wilson
- 19) Kristin Bailey, JoAnn Ellerbrock, Debbie Otto
- 20) Chris Souder
- 21) Dorothy Wilson
- 22) Mindy Riley
- 23) Amy Diersen, Barbara Hedin, **Don Wilson**
- 24) Nelma Byriel
- 25) Daniel Kennebeck, Gary Manning, Adelaide Worley
- 27) Jake Ackerson, Sam Adams, Emily Bailey, Morgan Hillmer, Marlyn Purdie
- 28) Dennis Johnson
- 29) Brittany Garcia, Paul Toms
- 30) Earl Bartels, Matthew Gibson, Daryl Glasnapp, Kari Lantz



- 10/05/1996 Bob & Jodi Purdie
 10/14/2012 Christopher & Angela Ramsey
 10/29/2005 Mark & Angela Edmondson

Anniversaries



Warming Hearts with God's Love and a Good Pair of Mittens

Far too often, children arrive at LSI's Beloit and Bremwood Residential Treatment Centers with very little in their possession.

We give thanks for Iowa congregations who faithfully respond to these needs, year after year! As winter approaches, LSI relies on your loving support to meet the demands for winter apparel for children and youth at Beloit and Bremwood. Often, children in residential treatment have little control over their lives, so it's important for us to give children the opportunity, when possible, to shop for their new coat or mittens. Because of this, we ask that you please not donate articles of clothing. With your generous financial donation, many children will have the simple joy of choosing their new coat, knowing that they are loved and cherished.

If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



