

# JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

# BEGINNINGS



**HOLY TRINITY**  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**

A Congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

## SEEING CHRIST

### THROUGH THE PAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Rev. John M. Fraiser

A study released in October 2009, reports that 46% of American adults regularly read the Bible. To my surprise, Bible reading among Christians is on the rise. It is actually up from 44% in 2004, 37% in 1999, and 36% in 1994.<sup>1</sup>

Having better access to Scripture is a big reason for this increase.<sup>2</sup> As time goes on, Bibles are becoming cheaper and more widely available in a variety of print and digital formats. People can find the Bible verse they're looking for in seconds by searching just a few words, and they can read Scripture on their smartphones, tablets, and e-readers. The Bible is available like never before.

It's worth contrasting Scripture's availability today with the availability in previous eras in history. So while there has never been a time at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, La Grange, Kentucky when her members did not have the Scriptures in their language and in their possession, consider another church bearing our namesake: parishioners worshipped in Holy Trinity Church in Goodramgate, York for some 500 years before they finally heard the Scriptures in English in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (the church still stands and God's saints still worship there).

#### A Brief History of How You Came to Have a Bible You Can Read

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. So how did we get to this point in history where we have Scripture in our own language? As I have already noted, gaining access to Scripture hasn't always been this easy. Indeed, in the scope of 2,000 years of church of history, those who could read the Bible for themselves are the exception to the rule.

Consider a few of the obstacles to having a Bible in common language:

- (1) For most of its history, the Roman Catholic Church has banned the translation of Scripture into language of the common people for two reasons: (a) It held that the Catholic Church should be the *sole* interpreter of Scripture. If a layperson could read Scripture for themselves, they might reach an interpretation which differed from that of the Catholic church. (b) The Roman Catholic Church regarded Jerome's Latin Vulgate (late 4<sup>th</sup> century) to be the only perfect translation. Once people no longer spoke Latin, they could not access Scripture in their own language. This was the state of affairs for more than 1,000 years of the church's history.
- (2) Literacy rates in the Middle Ages were remarkably low – regardless of the language. Generally, only the ruling class and clergy received any formal education.
- (3) Until Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable-type press in 1439, most books had to be copied by hand, which made them incredibly difficult to produce and, thus, incredibly expensive. Even though Gutenberg's press brought down the cost of books, they were still expensive. For example, in 1611, the first edition of the King James Bible cost over \$300 in today's currency.



One of Gutenberg's early printing presses. Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1439. The moveable type printing press is widely considered the most important invention in the last millennium.

All of these obstacles were eventually overcome. But how? Largely because of an unwavering pursuit by godly

men to put the Bible in the language of common people. Because Scripture is God's word, they believed it to be the highest authority – an authority to which even the church must submit. Therefore, they sought to make it available to each person in order that they would be able to hear from God and test all things by his authority.

Desiderius Erasmus, a scholar of ancient texts, and a contemporary of Martin Luther, states well the motivation of these men:

“I utterly dissent from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures should be read by the unlearned translated into their tongue, as though Christ's teaching was so obscure that it could hardly be understood even by a handful of theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The counsels of kings are much better kept hidden, but Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1516, after decades of painstaking study, Erasmus published the first complete Greek New Testament. It was this Greek New Testament from which Luther, in 1522, made the very first complete translation of the New Testament. Prior to Luther's German New Testament, all translations of Scripture were translations of the Latin Vulgate which was itself only a translation from Greek and Hebrew texts and often borrowed from the Old Latin texts.

Following Luther's translation into German, a host of other translations in other languages began to appear. The King James Version, for example, employed the philosophy that began with Luther: return to the original languages instead of the Latin Vulgate and put the Bible in the language of everyday speech. As Luther put it, “Your reader must be able to read God's Word as though it were written yesterday”<sup>4</sup>

The effect of Scripture on the church was undeniable. Even Johannes Cochlaeus, one of Luther's bitterest opponents, couldn't argue with the results:

Luther's New Testament was so much multiplied and spread by printers that even tailors and shoemakers, yea, even women and ignorant persons who had accepted this new Lutheran gospel, and could read a little German, studied it with the greatest avidity as the fountain of all truth. Some committed it to memory, and carried it about in their bosom. In a few months such people deemed themselves so learned that they were not ashamed to dispute about faith and the gospel not only with Catholic laymen, but even with priests and monks and doctors of divinity.<sup>5</sup>

This is exactly what Luther wanted. Of course, laypersons need to be taught how to understand the Scriptures and they need to learn principles of proper interpretation, but when handled accurately, the Scriptures are mighty in the hands of any Christian.

What a person believed was *not* to be grounded in the authority of the church but in the authority of the Word of God *alone* (*Sola Scriptura*), the word which carries no less than the authority of God himself. As Luther said, “The gospel is not to be believed because the church confirms it, but because one recognizes that it is God's word.”<sup>6</sup>

### The Value of Scripture in Our Own Language

Lutherans, perhaps more than any other Christian church body, have a rich heritage of putting the Bible into common language. But why has that been so important to us? We have already seen some of the reasons: Scripture is the voice of God himself who speaks with his authority to which we must all submit. People should be able to hear directly from God in their own language. They must be able to test what the church teaches according to what Scripture says.

There is still another reason, though, that Lutherans have focused so much on putting Scripture into the languages of the common person. *In Scripture, we encounter Christ himself.* Here we see him, hear him, and come to know him. According to Luther, “There is no doubt that all the Scripture points to Christ alone.”<sup>7</sup> “Take Christ out of the Scriptures and what more will you find in them?”<sup>8</sup> Erasmus stated the point even more strongly:

These writings set before you the living picture of his sacred mind, Christ as he actually spoke, healed, died, and rose from the grave, rendering him so completely present that you would see less of him if you had him directly in front of your eyes.<sup>9</sup>

Christ comes to you in Scripture. He corrects you. He comforts you. He guides you. He promises salvation to you. Here he speaks both law and gospel. All of this is yours through the pages of Holy Scripture. As St. Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). If you wish to know Jesus, you must look for him where he is found, and Holy Scripture – together with Holy Baptism and Holy Supper – is where we encounter Jesus Christ.

### Reading God's Word in 2012

So you've seen what dedication it took to get your English Bible and how blessed you are to have God's Word in your language when so many, for so long

could not read Scripture. You've seen just what God's Word is: all the authority of God and all the nearness of Jesus Christ. How rich we are with the Word of God. The question now is: what will you do with God's word? Will you read it? Will you study it? Will you hear Christ in it? Or will you ignore it?

This year, I have made available to everyone in our congregation an opportunity to read 100 essential Bible passages (This, of course, doesn't mean that those passages that didn't make the cut are *nonessential*). The program is called "E100" ([e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com)). By reading two passages per week, you will have read through most of the Bible in one year. In 2012, let's focus on reading God's Word – a privilege which God has given to us to know Jesus Christ himself. ■■

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<sup>1</sup> Barna Group, Website. 2009 study, accessed January 15, 2012. Found at: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/317-new-research-explores-how-different-generations-view-and-use-the-bible?q=bible+reading>; 2004, 1999, and 1994 studies, accessed January 15, 2012. Found at: <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/136-religious-activity-increasing-in-the-west>.

<sup>2</sup> Rising literacy rates in America are an important reason as well.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in James V. Schall, *The Modern Age*, (St. Augustine's Press: Chicago, 2011), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> WA 12, 444.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> WA 30:2, p. 687. Quoted in Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> WA 10:2, p. 73. Quoted in Althaus, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup> WA 18, p. 606. Quoted in Althaus, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> Erasmus, *Desiderius Erasmus: The Praise of Folly and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company), p. 127.

## ELDERS' CORNER

Kim Goss

I want to share with you about one of my favorite subjects, my role as elder at Holy Trinity. I start off by telling you that Pastor and I are recommending Joel Carey to the congregation to serve as an elder at Holy Trinity. Joel grew up as the son of a Lutheran pastor. He has a desire to see our members grow in faith, and we think he will be a good fit for the job. The elder's job consists of many different tasks. Some of these tasks are to assist the Pastor as needed with the spiritual care of the congregation, to be available to visit new and prospective members, to offer comfort and assistance to those in distress or in need, and to make sure the worship service goes well and, if needed, to assist the Pastor in this endeavor. We will also be there to help to resolve any differences that may arise among the congregation and reconcile the disagreeing parties.

As you can see, serving as elder is a very interesting and spiritual job. We are charged with many wonderful tasks, and we must always set a good example for the rest of the congregation. So now you know all about the role of elders in our church.

I would also like to tell you what a privilege it is for me to be able to serve as elder at Holy Trinity. We have a great congregation that is very supportive and dedicated. As I have said before, we have come so far in the last year-and-a-half that, if you were writing a book, it couldn't have a better story line or plot. I know God has great things in store for us, and all we have to do is commit ourselves to God and our Church and the story will have the perfect ending.

So in closing, God's blessings to all, and always remember: God Loves You and So Do I.



### THE ESSENTIAL ONE-HUNDRED BIBLE READING PLAN

Read through the Bible together as a congregation in two readings per week. Pick up your schedule from the information table in the Fellowship Hall.

**Got a smartphone?** You can follow the E100 plan using the YouVersion app for Android, iPhone, BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, or Palm. No need to remember which passages to read, the YouVersion app keeps you on schedule.

You can also follow the E100 plan on your computer. Just create an account on [youversion.com](http://youversion.com) and search "e100" to find the reading plan.

# A LOOK AT CONFIRMATION

## Q: What is confirmation?

**A:** Confirmation is a longstanding public rite of the Church which follows a period of instruction designed to help baptized Christians understand the content of the Christian faith and to ground them deeper in the life and mission of the Christian community. The rite of confirmation is a moment in which the individual Christian affirms the gift of grace God gave them in their baptism and makes a public confession of the Christian faith and a lifelong pledge of fidelity to Christ.

In the Lutheran church, the primary basis of instruction is Luther's *Small Catechism*.

While we want to teach children the Scriptures and Christian doctrine from the earliest days onward, confirmation helps to ensure that we are cover all the bases. It helps set a course for these students in how to study Scripture for themselves and how to think about issues in their life and in their world in a biblical manner.

## Q: What is confirmation like at Holy Trinity?

**A:** At Holy Trinity, Junior Confirmation normally begins in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and lasts two years. Presently, Pastor Fraiser meets with the confirmands every other Wednesday night from 6-8 PM. The students must memorize the Small Catechism and are tested on various points of Christian doctrine. So far the students have studied the distinguishing features of Lutheranism, the history of the Lutheran church, the different uses of the law, how to distinguish law and gospel, arguments for the existence of God, and the doctrine of the Trinity, and there's still plenty more to come!

## Q: What books are used in confirmation?

**A:** The primary text is Scripture, then Luther's Small Catechism. The students are also reading through a survey of Lutheran doctrine called *Lutheranism 101*, several articles and essays, and a book on the storyline of Scripture which Pastor Fraiser has not yet selected because he is incredibly picky!

## Q: Who are the confirmands?

**A:** This year there are five confirmands who have been studying since the fall of 2011. Here's a little bit about each one...



### Jared Atkins

Jared is sixteen years old. He was baptized in early 1997 and has been raised as a Christian. He has been homeschooled along with his 8 brothers and his best subjects are Latin and Literature. He enjoys chess,

reading, and competitive swimming. He serves as a crucifer at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.



### Noah Atkins

Noah is fourteen-years old. He was baptized in February 1998. He is the seventh of nine brothers. Noah is homeschooled along with his eight brothers. His best school subjects have been Logic and Geography. He enjoys

swimming, reading, and video games.



### Hunter Bach

Hunter and his family are from West Columbia, SC. Hunter was baptized at Mt. Hermon Lutheran Church, West Columbia, SC in February, 1998. Hunter is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Oldham County Middle School, and he enjoys playing a

variety of sports such as: soccer, baseball, basketball, football, tennis.



### Madelyn Carey

Madelyn was baptized in March 1999 by her grandfather. She has been a member on her school academic team since 4<sup>th</sup> grade and has won the District competition three years in a row. She plays flute in her school band and is a

member of GATES (Gifted and Talented Educational Services). She hopes to publish a book someday, and to go to Paris. She studies art in LaGrange, and wishes to pursue creative writing and possibly medicine in college.



### Brennan Riddell

Brennan is an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Harrison County Middle School. He was baptized in 2011 at Holy Trinity. He is a black belt in Shaolin-style Kung-Fu. Brennan loves to read Stephen King and he builds computer-programmed robots in his

spare time. He has an interest in attending Gatton Academy at WKU for his last years of high school. He plays alto sax, and since the 6<sup>th</sup> grade has been a member of the Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP).

# making plans for a new year

## pastor fraiser

Last year was an exciting year at Holy Trinity. We often talk in terms of numbers, but a lot of the most important things that happened can't really be quantified. I think we have seen an increase in people expressing to one another the bond we have in Christ. I've seen relationships heal between people. From what I can tell, we are more dedicated to the worship of God in Christ, and we are taking more seriously the study of God's Word than we perhaps did at one time. But none of these things can really be quantified, recorded or graphed on a chart. Yet, these things are truly more important than the things that can be quantified.

Of course, numbers matter in certain ways as well, and it's worth looking at a few of those.

- We saw **39** new members added in 2011 (the count in my report to the Lutheran Federation was too low).
- We saw **8** baptisms, and we confirmed **1** junior confirmand.
- Our averaged attendance for Sunday worship was **78** persons.
- We added new Sunday School classes.
- We began a pre-confirmation program (The Sola Society) and a youth program.
- We sent **1** youth to the Higher Things youth conference.
- We started our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Reformation Festival, with **81** people attending.
- We met our budget for the year.

I want to point out that as good as these things are, these are not necessarily the signs of a Christ-centered church. Sadly, churches can (and do) get many people and a lot of money, and have a lot of programs with almost no focus at all on the proper worship of God, the Sacraments, and the faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word.

In 2012, we shouldn't confuse success according to a human measurement of success with Christ's doing his work in the lives of people through the ministry of our church. *We will make plans. We will keep track of numbers, but the only way we should measure success is by faithfulness to what God has given us to do.*

Once we begin to use our numbers as an indication of our success, I can assure you that we will begin to compromise what God has commanded to achieve more and more success as we have defined it. This has happened to too many churches, and Holy Trinity will be no different once our highest aim is to improve the numbers.

So let's just seek to be faithful in our tasks of WITNESS, MERCY, and LIFE TOGETHER and watch God work through these things as he chooses.

**We have a Leadership Retreat coming up on Saturday, Feb 4<sup>th</sup> from 9–noon.** All of our goals should fit easily under the headings of WITNESS, MERCY, and LIFE TOGETHER. But if an idea doesn't fit, we should toss it out. During our retreat, we will look at which areas are most deficient in our church, and we will discuss how we can improve in these areas. I can tell you already, the two biggest areas we need to improve on are EVANGELISM and FELLOWSHIP.

Here are just a few goals I would like you to think about for 2012.

- Increasing our community presence and outreach to families in need
- Strengthening the fellowship in the congregation through more fellowship opportunities
- Helping to send six teens to Higher Things youth conference (together with the teens at Divine Savior Lutheran Church)
- Developing a stronger men's ministry and women's ministry
- Repainting our sanctuary, resealing our parking lot, retiling our kitchen and bathrooms



# The Sola Society

## An Update on the Sola Society

We are so blessed to have nine children in The Sola Society! Each week's lesson is taught by one of the two Sola professors, Emily Fraiser and Janet Atkins.

The Sola program began as Emily's creation in the fall of 2008 at Concordia Lutheran Church in Louisville. Since then the program has taken shape and now includes a memorization schedule of the Small Catechism for each age group. But the heart of The Sola Society is that each young scholar would grow in faith and knowledge of Christ.

Martin Luther's greatest accomplishment was not founding the Lutheran Church, but his work to ensure that all believers could know from Scripture the salvation won by Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. Luther himself worked and developed a Bible in the German language so that everyone, not just the well-educated, could read and understand the words of Christ. Our aim is that children would have a vast knowledge of the life and times of Martin Luther – much more than just a passing "textbook" understanding of the Lutheran church's founder – because ultimately it was his pursuit of Jesus Christ and his wish to remain faithful to the word of God that began the Reformation. Our hope is that our studies will produce children and then adults who love Christ and His church.

The Sola Society is a pre-confirmation Sunday night program for students in 1st - 6th grades. Every week, the young scholars dive into the life and times of Martin Luther, his Small Catechism and the birth of the Lutheran church. We meet every Sunday night from 6-7:30pm.

# CAMP LAKEVIEW

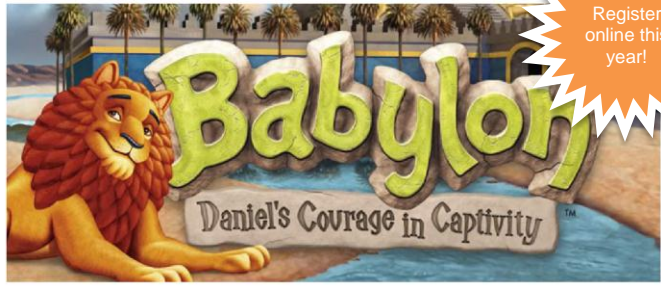
Camp Lakeview, a Lutheran camp near Seymour, IN, is currently registering campers for its 2012 summer season. It is a great place for children to have fun and learn about our Lord.

To get more information and a registration form, pick up a summer brochure from the information table in the Fellowship Hall, visit the camp's website at [www.cاملakeview.com](http://www.cاملakeview.com), or call the camp office at 812-342-4815. The new Lakeview Villages campsite will be fully operational this summer. This exciting expansion allows more kids to come to camp and allows youth to come throughout their high school years. Registration begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>.



## Mark your calendar for these upcoming Children's Events:

- Sat, April 7<sup>th</sup> 10am Easter Egg Hunt
- Sat, July 21<sup>st</sup> Oldham County Day & Parade
- July 29<sup>th</sup> - Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - Thursday 6:30-8:30pm VBS - Babylon: Daniel's Courage in Captivity
- Sat, October 20<sup>th</sup> 5pm 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reformation Festival
- Sun, Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> 10am Children's Christmas Service



Register online this year!

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 29 - Aug 2

visit [www.htlc-lagrange.org/vbs.html](http://www.htlc-lagrange.org/vbs.html) for more details

## Thursday BIBLE STUDY

Come discuss the upcoming-Sunday's lessons. Thursdays at 7 PM. The Thursday Bible Study is led by Kim Goss (cell 502-639-3443, home 502-225-6687). Everyone is welcome. You are not behind in our study. Just come and enjoy a discussion of God's word.

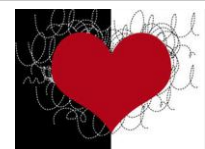
## Women's BIBLE STUDY

Fridays at 10 AM. Join women from Holy Trinity to discuss the topic of spiritual warfare. Though Satan is against us, attacks us, and ruins lives in this world, Jesus Christ won the victory for us at the cross and continues to fight for us until the last day. Through the study of Kay Arthur's book and video series, *Lord Is It Warfare?*, you can learn what God's Word has to say about faith in the midst of spiritual attack. Contact Debbie Edwards if you have any questions.



Search for "Holy Trinity Lutheran Church LaGrange, KY". Get updates on events, see photos, and listen to podcasts.

## Valentine's Day Dinner



Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm

Join us for an evening of Italian Cuisine, Wine & Beverages, and Entertainment

**Tickets - \$12 per person**

Open to all adults: singles and couples

\*Babysitting available. Please sign up.\*

Funds received will benefit our Children & Youth Summer Programs

Also, we are looking for members to loan any card tables that they have. If you have a card table and would be willing to loan it, please drop it by the church when it's convenient.

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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<b>SUNDAY WORSHIP</b>	9:30 AM
<b>ADULT BIBLE STUDY AND CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL</b>	11:00 AM

Visit us on the web at [htlc-lagrange.org](http://htlc-lagrange.org). Find dates for events, sermon audio, and the newsletter.



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