

# *St. Stephen Lutheran Church and School*

*An Affiliate of the Church of the Lutheran Confession*

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**The Day of Pentecost – 31**

**May 2009**

## **Liturgy — Page 5 of *The Lutheran Hymnal***

HYMNS: 224 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord  
235 O Holy Spirit, Enter In (stanzas 1-4 & 5-8)  
231 We Now Implore God The Holy Ghost

Sermon Text: Joel 2,28-31

Sermon Theme: "The Promise Of The Holy Spirit"

1. The Promise Has Been Fulfilled
2. The Promise Is Fulfilled Continually
3. The Promise Will Be Perfectly Fulfilled On The Last Day

**INTROIT:** The Spirit of the Lord fills the world, Hallelujah: let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him. **Glory be to the Father ...**

**COLLECT:** O God, who did teach the hearts of Your faithful people, by sending to them the light of Your Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns one God, world without end. **Amen.**

## Old Testament

Joel 2,28-32

“And it shall come to pass afterward,  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and daughters shall prophecy,  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions:  
29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth,  
Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.  
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD  
32 And it shall come to pass  
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.  
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,  
As the LORD has said,  
Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.”

## Epistle

Acts 2,1-13



And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And there appeared to them tongues of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when the sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own tongue. <sup>7</sup> And they were

amazed and marveled, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we each hear them in our own tongue to which we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Lybia around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs — we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” <sup>12</sup> And they continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> But other were mocking and saying, “They are full of new wine.”

#### GRADUAL

The Spirit of the LORD has filled the world,

**And that which holds all things together knows what is said.**

The right hand of the LORD is exalted;

**The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.**

This is the day which the LORD has made,

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;

**We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.**

The LORD is God and He has given us light;

**Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.**

You are my God, and I give thanks to You;

**You are my God, I extol You.**

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

**For His lovingkindness is everlasting.**

.Hallelujah. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created:

**And You renew the face of the earth!** [sing triple Hallelujah]

#### Gospel

John 14,23-31

Response: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

<sup>25</sup> These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.  
<sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. <sup>28</sup> You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. <sup>30</sup> I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; <sup>31</sup> but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me .” [Scripture passages are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, used by permission]

Response: Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

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Lessons for 7 June – Trinity Sunday – A Service with Holy Communion

**Old Testament:** Isaiah 6,1-8  
**Epistle:** Romans 11,33-36  
**Gospel:** John 3,1-15

**Weekly Scripture Verse:** “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4,6)

**Luther’s Explanation of the Third Article of the Creed**

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

***What does this mean?***

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.  
But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the one true faith.  
In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.  
In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me

and all believers.

On the last day He will raise me up and all the dead and give to me  
and all believers in Christ eternal life.

This is most certainly true.

**The Introit and Gradual** are based on selected verses from the Wisdom of Solomon and Psalm 118.

**Joel 2,28–31.** In the Hebrew Bible, these verses constitute chapter three in Joel. This division was first done in Venice in 1524–25 in Daniel Bomberg's printing of the second Rabbinic Bible of Jacob ben Hayyim.

**Church Picnic** – Sunday, 28 June, after the service in Hayward at Carlos Bee Park on Grove Way just east of the Pioneer Chapel. Mark your calendars!

**Pulpit Exchange.** Pastors Radichel and Karp are exchanging pulpits today since this is the fifth Sunday of the month.

**Call News** — The Rev. Mark Gullerud, Messiah, Eau Claire, WI, has accepted the Call from Redeemer Lutheran, Bowdle and Zion Lutheran, Ipswich. Our Redeemer's Lutheran, Red Wing MN, has called the Rev. David Schaller, Dowagiac MI. Messiah Lutheran, Eau Claire WI, has called Mmes. Lori Wirth (English literature and composition, 5–8), and Anya Oster (pre-K) to fill the positions of Mmes. Kelly Beekman and Becky Buck respectively, who have resigned from the teaching ministry.

**Paul Gerhardt** (12 March 1507–27 May 1676) – Pastor & Hymnist. He was born near Wittenberg and graduated from the University of Wittenberg in 1642. Because of the Thirty Years' War, there were few positions and he served as a tutor in the home of his future father-in-law. In 1651, he



became superintendent in Mittenwalde in Brandenburg, where he composed most of his hymns. From 1657–69 he was the Pastor of the St. Nikolaus Church in Berlin but was deposed in 1666 by the Elector of Brandenburg because Gerhardt upheld the orthodox Lutheran position and refused to say he would not speak against the Calvinists or Reformed from the pulpit (note: the Elector was a Calvinist). Gerhardt was widely admired in Berlin and

actually did not use the pulpit for polemics; in fact, the Elector's wife was

one of his supporters and attended St. Nikolaus. The Elector re-appointed him after a year, but he resigned after several years because he felt that to continue in this position would be a repudiation of the Formula of Concord, of which he was a signatory. He lived in straitened circumstances for several years but then was appointed arch-deacon of Lübben by Duke August of Saxony. By this time, his wife and four children had died and he lived with his sister-in-law and only remaining son. He is considered to be Germany's finest hymnist. Gerhardt wrote over 130 hymns. Gerhardt's hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal* are:

I Will Sing My Maker's Praises (25); O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee (58); All My Heart This Night Rejoices (77); O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is (81); Come, Your Hearts And Voices Raising (90); We Sing, Immanuel, Thy Praise (108); Now, Let Us Come Before Him (122); A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth (142); Upon The Cross Extended (171); O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (172); Awake, My Heart, With Gladness (192); Oh, Enter, Lord, Thy Temple (228); Jesus, Thy Boundless Love To Me (349); Commit Whatever Grieves Thee (520); Why Should Cross And Trial Grieve Me? (523); If God Himself Be For Me (528); Rejoice My Heart, Be Glad And Sing (535); Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadows (534); O Lord, I Sing With Lips And Heart (569); All Ye Who On This Earth Do Dwell (581); A Pilgrim And A Stranger (586).

On 28 May 1577, The **Formula of Concord** was presented to Elector August of Saxony and subsequently three Electors of the Holy Roman Empire, 20

dukes and princes, 24 counts, four barons, 35 imperial free cities and over 8,000 pastors subscribed to it. It is a statement of Lutheran teaching. About two-thirds of the Lutheran territories in Germany subscribed to the Formula, and those



which did not generally did not for political or personal reasons and not doctrinal reasons.

After Luther's death in 1546, several major controversies broke out within Lutheranism. Some Lutheran theologians wished to seek a non-Scriptural accommodation with Catholic or Reformed teachings and some

Lutheran theologians advocated a non-Scriptural position on teachings within Lutheranism itself. The Formula set forth a proper Scriptural basis for resolving the controversies and in each instance clearly set forth what was to be confessed and what was to be condemned. The Formula is divided into two parts: The Epitome, which is a summary of the Lutheran position, and The Solid Declaration, which is detailed exposition of the Epitome. The topics addressed are: Original Sin, Free Will, The Righteousness of Faith Before God, Good Works, Law and Gospel, The Third Use of the Law, The Lord's Supper, The Person of Christ, Christ's Descent into Hell, Ecclesiastical Rites (or Adiaphora), God's Eternal Foreknowledge and Election, and Other Factions and Sects which never accepted the Augsburg Confession (that is: Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and Anti-Trinitarians).

**A Reading from the Book of Concord for the Day of Pentecost. Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II: Free Will**

Dr. Luther says about Psalm 90: "In worldly and outward affairs, which apply to the livelihood and maintenance of the body, a person is intelligent, and quite active. But in spiritual and divine things, which apply to the salvation of the soul, a person neither sees nor perceives God's terrible and fierce wrath resulting from sin and death. He continues in his security. No warnings, no threats, no chiding, are of any help. Indeed, all teaching and preaching is lost on him until he is enlightened, converted, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Out of pure mercy, He has willed that poor fallen human nature might be a participant in conversion, God's grace and eternal life. This comes only from pure grace, through the effective working of the Holy Spirit."

Before a person is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can hear the Gospel, meditate on it and discuss it. Nevertheless, he regards it as foolishness and cannot believe it. For he is hostile to God's will, unless the Holy Spirit is effective on him and kindles and works in him faith and obedience.

The Holy Scriptures credit conversion solely to the Holy Spirit's divine work. Only the Holy Spirit causes a person to be born anew. He opens the mind and heart to understand the Scriptures. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12,3). (§ 20-22, 24-26) (Condensed from CONCORDIA: THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS, copyright 2005,2006 by Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)

**The Council of Nicea** (mid-May to June of 325). The Council of Nicea was the first of seven recognized Ecumenical Councils and was called and presided over by the Emperor Constantine, primarily in order to combat the Arian heresy, which falsely taught that Jesus is subordinate and inferior to God the Father. It did that and also adopted a Creed which is the basis for the Nicene Creed, whose finished form was adopted by the Council of Constantinople in 381, although in 589 at the Third Council of Toledo the Western Church added the *Filioque*, “and the Son,” which has never been accepted by the Eastern Church. About 318 bishops attended (although that number is open to debate), all but seven of whom were from the East; the Bishop of Rome sent a priest as a representative and had no influence over the Council. The Council also set the date for Easter, so as to distinguish it from the Jewish Passover; it decreed that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday.

The book and movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, make several false claims about the Council: it did not establish the divinity of Christ but reaffirmed what the Church had always taught and believed; it did not establish the canon (books) of the New Testament as these had been accepted in their present form for at least 150 years before the Council; it did not strengthen the power of the Bishop of Rome.



**Thoughts on Dan Brown by Ross Douthat.** The following appeared as an Op-Ed piece in the *New York Times* on 19 May 2009. In view of the movie, *Angel's and Demons*, based on a book by Dan Brown, and Brown's upcoming sequel to *The Da Vinci Code*, it would be well to reflect that Brown's stories are not “value neutral” nor is he just telling a “good story.”

The movie treatment of his novel, “Angels and Demons,” is cleaning up at the box office this week. The sequel to “The Da Vinci Code,” due out in November, might buoy the publishing industry through the recession. And if you want to understand the state of American religion, you need to understand why so many people love Dan Brown.

It isn't just that he knows how to keep the pages turning. That's what it takes to sell a million novels. But if you want to sell a 100 million, you need to preach as well as entertain — to present a fiction that can be read as fact, and that promises to unlock the secrets of history, the universe and God along the way.

Brown is explicit about this mission. He isn't a serious novelist, but he's a deadly serious writer: His thrilling plots, he's said, are there to make the books' didacticism go down easy, so that readers don't realize till the end “how much they are learning along the way.” He's working in

the same genre as Harlan Coben and James Patterson, but his real competitors are ideologues like Ayn Rand, and spiritual gurus like Eckhart Tolle and Deepak Chopra. He's writing thrillers, but he's selling a theology.

Brown's message has been called anti-Catholic, but that's only part of the story. True, his depiction of the Roman Church's past constitutes a greatest hits of anti-Catholicism, with slurs invented by 19th-century Protestants jostling for space alongside libels fabricated by 20th-century Wiccans. (If he targeted Judaism or Islam this way, one suspects that no publisher would touch him.)

But Brown doesn't have the soul of a true-believing Enemy of the Faith. Deep down, he has a fondness for the ordinary, well-meaning sort of Catholic, his libels against their ancestors notwithstanding. He's even sympathetic to the religious yearnings of his Catholic villains — including, yes, the murderous albino monks.

This explains why both "The Da Vinci Code" and "Angels and Demons" end with a big anti-Catholic reveal (Jesus had kids with Mary Magdalene! That terrorist plot against the Vatican was actually launched by an archconservative priest!) followed by a big cover-up. A small elect (Tom Hanks and company, in the movies) gets to know what really happened, but the mass of believers remain in the dark, lest their spiritual questing be derailed by disillusionment and scandal.

Having dismissed Catholicism's truth claims and demonized its most sincere defenders, Brown pats believers on the head and bids them go on fingering their rosary beads.

In the Brownian worldview, all religions — even Roman Catholicism — have the potential to be wonderful, so long as we can get over the idea that any one of them might be particularly true. It's a message perfectly tailored for 21st-century America, where the most important religious trend is neither swelling unbelief nor rising fundamentalism, but the emergence of a generalized "religiousness" detached from the claims of any specific faith tradition.

The polls that show more Americans abandoning organized religion don't suggest a dramatic uptick in atheism: They reveal the growth of do-it-yourself spirituality, with traditional religion's dogmas and moral requirements shorn away. The same trend is at work within organized faiths as well, where both liberal and conservative believers often encounter a God who's too busy validating their particular version of the American Dream to raise a peep about, say, how much money they're making or how many times they've been married.

These are Dan Brown's kind of readers. Piggybacking on the fascination with lost gospels and alternative Christianities, he serves up a Jesus who's a thoroughly modern sort of messiah — sexy, worldly, and Goddess-worshiping, with a wife and kids, a house in the Galilean suburbs, and no delusions about his own divinity.

But the success of this message — which also shows up in the work of Brown's many thriller-writing imitators — can't be separated from its

dishonesty. The “secret” history of Christendom that unspools in “The Da Vinci Code” is false from start to finish. The lost gospels are real enough, but they neither confirm the portrait of Christ that Brown is peddling — they’re far, far weirder than that — nor provide a persuasive alternative to the New Testament account. The Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — jealous, demanding, apocalyptic — may not be congenial to contemporary sensibilities, but he’s the only historically-plausible Jesus there is.

For millions of readers, Brown’s novels have helped smooth over the tension between ancient Christianity and modern American faith. But the tension endures. You can have Jesus or Dan Brown. But you can’t have both.