



*"Which hope we have as an Anchor of the
soul,
both sure and steadfast."*

Hebrews 6:19

Vol. 52, Num. 6

THE ANCHOR

February 2018

From the Pastor . . .

I want to make all here at Mount Hope Lutheran Church aware that lately there has been some controversy and debate in our Synod about the age of the earth, creation, and evolution. An article published by one of our seminaries, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, correctly stated that the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has never taken a position on the exact age of the earth. We haven't. We don't know how old the earth is exactly. If you take the genealogies in the Bible back to Adam and Eve, it seems the earth is only six thousand years old. But if, as often happens in the Bible, there are skipped generations in the genealogies, so that it goes from a great-grandfather to a great-grandson, without mentioning the grandfather and father, then it could be that the earth is some thousands of years older than six thousand years. So the LCMS has never stated an exact age, because we don't want to go beyond what the Bible says. But what the LCMS has consistently done is hold to the Bible's teaching that the earth is young, that it is not the product of evolution, that it did not take billions of years to form, and that God created it in six normal days. The article put all these things into question, suggesting that we can stretch the days of creation to mean millions of years. But the Bible is clear – "morning and evening were the first day," etc. Genesis 1 makes very clear that these days are comparable in time to our days, which begin with a morning and end with an evening. When articles come out within our Synod that contradict God's clear word, it's the duty of Synod's pastors to call it out as wrong. Happily, this is exactly what happened. Due in large part to the Wyoming District pointing out the error in this article, the article has been retracted and Concordia Seminary has apologized for publishing it as they did. Thank God for that. Scripture is God speaking. And He speaks clearly. He speaks clearly about creation. And, thank our Lord, He speaks clearly about our sin and our Savior, who has borne our sin in His body to free us from all evil eternally. I commend to your reading the following article and personal confession of LCMS President, Pastor Matthew Harrison:

Creation is a mystery. Just as science will forever have a problem with Jesus being God and man, with His virgin birth, or with His resurrection, so science will forever scoff at or, at best, view the creation account in Genesis as mythology. Though I'm no scientist, I've had challenges myself believing that the creation accounts are history. When will a talking snake appear believable to reason? How, in the face of the dominant theory of evolution, will the special creation of Adam out of dust and in a flash appear reasonable? And what of Eve from a rib? How can I possibly hold to an actual creation of all things in six natural days?

The LCMS's classic statement on creation was made a long time ago in the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (1932), and it still holds today:

We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Genesis 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence and confess with Luther's Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures."

Over the centuries, there have been a plethora of attempts to alleviate the "scandal" of the creation accounts and to understand them in a way that is less offensive to human reason. Although it is true that the Synod has not defined as biblical doctrine a specific age of the earth, attempts to alleviate the scandal of the creation accounts by suggesting that the earth is somehow millions or billions of years old actually compound the scandal in my view. Can we somehow stretch the meaning of a "day" in Genesis 1 into an eon or long period of time? If so, then how is it that light is created prior to the sun? How is it that vegetation is created before the sun? How is it that God creates fish and birds prior to the other animals?

You simply cannot stretch the days of Genesis 1 into eons in order to somehow accommodate science or evolutionary theory (or even some version of Old Earth Creationism based on a non-literal understanding of a "day") in any meaningful or coherent way. Either the account in Genesis 1-2 is myth, or it is history — albeit, history written in a profoundly simple way to express profound truths. There is no middle ground. And if humankind is the result of some evolutionary process, then death was built into creation from the beginning — a view that the Scriptures categorically reject. In the end, there can be no historical Adam and Eve in a mythical Garden of Eden. So-called "Old Earth Creationism" largely runs aground.

Why do I believe that the creation accounts are historical? I believe them because I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior. And I hear in the words of Jesus that He himself believes the creation accounts are historical. (See MATT:19:3-9.) I hear in the words of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, the voice of my Savior. And both He and the Scriptures bear witness to their absolute inerrancy and infallibility. With Luther, when I come to passages that are hard to believe, "I doff my hat to the Holy Spirit and figure that He is wiser than I am." Or as Luther said elsewhere regarding Genesis 1: "We assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively, i.e., that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit" (Luther's Works, vol. 1, page 5).

What about our faithful scientists and others who struggle with these issues? There will always be a struggle between faith and reason. In matters of clear teaching of the Bible, I must hold to the Scriptures. However, there are many disciplines that operate under the category of reason, e.g., the scientific method, etc. And many Christian scientists have and will continue to make arguments based upon their best scientific inquiry to defend the historicity or the very reasonable possibility of the Bible's

accounts being true. That's called apologetics. More power to them. As Lutherans, we are not anti-science. Nevertheless, the truths of Holy Scripture — and that includes God's creation of everything ex nihilo ("out of nothing") — are most often well beyond human reason.

Despite scientism and evolutionary philosophy, the advances of science (far from disproving God) have only demonstrated a deeply complex and amazing universe. A recent study of the human genome concluded, by tracing markers on the male chromosome, that all human beings have one common male ancestor. That's phenomenal to consider! Christians should not be against science, but only against philosophies which would eliminate God from creation, deny His existence or attack the veracity of His Word.

In the 1970s, some thought that if one only believed the Gospel, other issues taught by Scripture were up for grabs. In response, Synod adopted A Statement of Biblical and Confessional Principles (1973), which clarified Synod's teaching on the Scriptures:

Since the saving work of Jesus Christ was accomplished through His personal entrance into our history and His genuinely historical life, death and resurrection, we acknowledge that the recognition of the soteriological purpose of Scripture in no sense permits us to call into question or deny the historicity or factuality of matters recorded in the Bible.

We therefore reject the following views ...

That recognition of the primary purpose of Scripture makes it irrelevant whether such questions of fact as the following are answered in the affirmative: Were Adam and Eve real historical individuals? Did Israel cross the Red Sea on dry land? Did the brazen serpent miracle actually take place? Was Jesus really born of a virgin? Did Jesus perform all the miracles attributed to Him? Did Jesus' resurrection actually involve the return to life of His dead body?

In short, I believe in the Gospel of free forgiveness, made incarnate in history — in the conception, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the God-man. Because I believe the Gospel, I recognize the words of my shepherd, Jesus, in Holy Scripture. If I reject what Scripture teaches as history about creation, why should I not then reject everything else (including the resurrection itself) that appears contrary to reason?

Even as we say "I believe; help my unbelief" (MARK 9:24), we should be very humble as we approach this mystery of creation, and humble and kind to those who struggle with the issue. It's a cross that many of us will bear in this life, until we see Him "face to face" (I COR. 13:12).

God help us.

– Pastor Harrison

From the School . . .

“They make a man not in the least responsible for his faults, but mere flesh and blood and putrid pride, so that the blame lies with the Creator and orderer of the heaven and stars.” - The Confessions, Augustine

The students in one of my literature classes read *The Confessions* this past fall. Augustine so beautifully relates the story of his conversion that one quickly recognizes that this is no mere autobiography or memoir. The entire book is a prayer – one of humility and repentance and contrite confession. The book had strongly influenced me when I first read it in college, but reading it with my students this year provided a more profound perspective. A significant amount of the story recounts Augustine’s young years, the years that my students are just about to embark upon. And Augustine holds very little back about what life is truly like as a young person, especially with regards to temptations and thoughts toward God. A reader might not be so surprised when he finds Augustine honestly addressing the dangers of sexual immorality and the constant temptations that arise for any young person in that category. But more than this rather obvious subject, Augustine focuses on the most prevailing problem for the young person – the arrogant claim that he knows everything. This is actually a more serious problem than the simple arrogance of the youth who declares to his parents after every advisement, “I know!” Ultimately, this is the struggle of the uneducated young man. The goal of his education is to teach him that he does not, in fact, know everything. J.R.R. Tolkien even calls the “essence of education” repentance: “It is recognizing that we don’t know what we ought to know. We don’t do what we aspire to do. We make up a thousand excuses as to why it is that we’re not all that we are called to be.” This sounds very much like our call to daily repentance of our sinfulness, our daily need to drown the Old Adam by contrition. And as Augustine says above, the student, the young man, is prone, not to freely admit this and gladly proceed in his lessons, but rather to blame anyone else, especially his creator. “I don’t know that because you haven’t taught me yet.” And is this not what we do as humans as well? “How can I be perfect? I was conceived in sin! I never had a chance. You made me this way.” I tell my students regularly that they cannot learn if they cannot admit that they don’t know something. In the same way, God calls us to repent of our evil deeds, for to be made whole again, we must recognize our brokenness. And our loving God is ever ready to mend us, as Augustine reminds us, “who is this but our God, sweetness and source of justice, who ‘does not despise a contrite and humble heart’? (Ps. 51:17)” Augustine provides an example not only to my students about how to humble oneself and bravely declare one’s ignorance, though his example is ideal and quite obvious (they are quick to judge him and recognize his stubbornness and impudence), but he also provides a clear lesson to the Christian of how much more ready our Lord is to draw us to Himself and forgive us than we are to repent and acknowledge our sin. May we ever be as patient with our young people as our Father is with us.

Miss Olson 6th, 7th, 8th Grades



OFFICIAL ACTS

Transfer In: None

Reception by Profession of Faith: Marsha Stoumbaugh

Transfer Out: Bruce, Teresa and Evan Sowers, and Verna Larsen to Trinity Lutheran, Casper

Removed by Self-Exclusion: See Elders' Report from Jan. 28, 2018 Voters' Mtg.

Funeral: None

Wedding: None

Baptism: None

Adult Confirmation: None

Feb. 24	Tenley Eskam	2
Feb. 24	Lorraine Radford	
Feb. 25	Robert Harris, Sr.	
Feb. 26	Quinten Kittel	3
Feb. 26	Rex Thorne	

News & Notes

LWML NEWS

"Jesus is the solid Rock on which God builds His Church. On Him, and Him alone, we stand forgiven."

Augsburg Confession Article IV

Come, ladies, for the fellowship of fine food and the nourishment of God's Word on

Saturday, February 10 at 9:00a.m.

Pastor Preus will lead us in a study on the Augsburg Confession beginning at 9:15a.m.

The fabulous hostesses for February's meeting will be Betty Bayer and Lori Carl.

The LWML will be hosting the first Lenten Soup Supper on Wednesday, February 21.

If you want to learn how you can help, **plan to attend a short meeting in the Preschool Room on Sunday, February 11,** following Divine Service.

In God's love and service,
The LWML Board

Good Shepherd News

The Good Shepherd Auxiliary prayerfully and financially supports Bethesda Lutheran Communities, which serve people with developmental disabilities in group homes. Our members at Mount Hope join in the



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mark & Jessica Scott Feb. 23 5 years

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Feb. 3	Phil Baumann		
Feb. 3	Pastor Daniel Holthus		
Feb. 4	Amanda Gehrke		
Feb. 4	Austin Hansen		6
Feb. 4	Dennis Rollins		
Feb. 5	Charlene Aakre		
Feb. 7	Anita Haase		
Feb. 9	Angela Hill		
Feb. 9	Jared Lee		
Feb. 9	Luke Talbott		
Feb. 10	Christina Lewallen		
Feb. 11	Daniele Ritzman		
Feb. 12	Samuel Castillo	MHLS	12
Feb. 13	Bryan Soliz		
Feb. 15	Suzanne Olson		
Feb. 16	Christine Preus	MHLS	8
Feb. 17	Annaleah Castillo	MHLS	8
Feb. 18	Shirley Olson		
Feb. 21	Marguerite Carr		
Feb. 21	Ashleigh Wigington		
Feb. 22	Jeremy Wendinger		
Feb. 23	Samuel Airisa		
Feb. 23	Carol Paulson		

mission to reach forward in Faith, Word, and deed by sharing the love of Jesus.

We will meet February 16, at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments followed by a business meeting. A birthday offering is to be collected with the amount being tied to a member's years of age. Some choose to give a dime for each birthday – it is entirely up to the giver. Our oldest member is 97 years young, and what great support she brings to Good Shepherd! If you would like to support Good Shepherd, please consider becoming a member.

Deloris Radtke is leading the Bethesda campaign and she would be happy to accept any donation. This year, an annual donation of \$10 (or more!) has been suggested by headquarters. **Please consider becoming a member by filling out our name, address, city/state/zip and giving this information to Deloris with your donation.**

In the Shepherd's care,
Debbie Lee, President

Monday Night Bible Study will be held Feb. 5 and 12, at 8:00 pm. Wednesday Bible Study will be held Feb. 7 and 14, at 9:30 am. After these dates, weekday Bible Studies will be put on hold until after the Lenten season.

GEMÜTLICHKEIT WILL BE AT 7:00 PM ON A DATE TO BE DETERMINED AT PASTOR PREUS'S. ALL MEN (YOUNG AND OLD) ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION AND ENJOY FELLOWSHIP IN THE WORD.

The Food for Thought Project THANKS YOU for your contributions of food in 2017. February will continue with the need for canned soup. Please leave your donations on the food box in the school wing. THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

A BIG Thank You to Harlan & Bonnie Winckler, Gene & Lorie Carl and Darrell Bayer for funding and installing the baseboards and door thresholds in our church.

Please help the Church Secretary by looking through the Prayer List and seeing if

any changes are needing to
be made. Thank you!
**LENTEN SOUP SUPPER and
SERVICE SCHEDULE!**

Feb. 14 -

7:00 pm – Ash Wednesday Divine
Service – NO SOUP SUPPER ON THIS NIGHT!

Feb. 21 –

5:30 – 6:30 pm – Soup Supper
(hosted by LWML)

7:00 pm – Vespers Service

Feb. 28 –

5:30 – 6:30 pm – Soup Supper
(hosted by the Elders)

7:00 pm – Vespers Service

Mar. 7 –

5:30 – 6:30 pm – Soup Supper
(hosted by the Board of Ed)

7:00 pm – Vespers Service

Mar. 14 –

5:30 – 6:30 pm – Soup Supper
(hosted by the Church Council)

7:00 pm – Vespers Service

Mar. 21 –

5:30 – 6:30 pm – LAST Soup Supper
(hosted by the Youth Group)

7:00 pm – Vespers Service

Mar. 29 – Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm – Divine Service

Mar. 30 – Good Friday

7:00 pm – Divine Service

Mar. 31 – Easter Vigil

8:00 pm

April 1 – Happy Easter!!

6:30 am – Sunrise Divine Service

8:00 – 9:30 am – Easter Breakfast in
Fellowship Hall

9:30 am – Easter Egg Hunt

10:00 am – Divine Service

BABY BOTTLE BOOMERANG 2018!!

Announcing True Care Women's Resource Center's Baby Bottle Boomerang! Baby bottles from the Center will be available here at church for you to take home between now and Presidents' Day (February 18). Each bottle has a tag that lists the life-affirming services of True Care Women's Resource Center and the costs of some of the many materials needed to keep the ministry going. Please your baby bottle in a prominent place in your home where you will remember to pray for the staff, volunteers, and patients of the Center. Return your bottle on Presidents' Day weekend (February 18), filled with the coins, bills, and checks you collect. Thank you for partnering with True Care to erase the perceived need for abortion in our community!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Elders</u>	<u>Acolytes</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
4	9:00 AM On Call	Ken Temme Ken Temme	Brody Parks	Randy & Paula Thoroughman	H: Larry Harrington, John Rudd, Bryan & Logan Soliz
11	9:00 AM On Call	Benjamin Craig Benjamin Craig	Thomas Graham	Kasey & Kirsten Southard	G: Ed Fink, Randy Thoroughman, Dennis Rollins, Phil Baumann
14	7:00 PM	Bob Doctor		Tarayca Walters	B: Darrell Bayer, Luke Drury, Russel Paulson, Wally Aakre
18	9:00 AM On Call	Randy Sorenson Randy Sorenson	Tristin Jacob	Pam Schuler	C: Bob Doctor, Dan Klassen, Brandon Weaver, Nick Lewallen III
21	7:00 PM	Bob Doctor		Bob & Wendy Doctor	E: Ken Temme, Randy & Paul Sorenson, Sam & Daniel Cordova
25	9:00 AM	Mike Baden	Brody Parks	Mark Brattis	F: Benjamin Craig, Ed Engelke, Dan & Eric Graham, Charles Bonds
28	7:00 PM	Bob Doctor		Jeff & Linda Snyder and sons	D: Dan Graham, Samuel & Daniel Airisa, Michael Hill

Reminder to Greeters: Please have each visitor sign the guest book with their home address and the name of their home church.

Altar Guild: Janet Walters and Tarayca Walters

Offering Counter: Ed Fink, Samuel Airisa

Sunday Coffee: Tarayca Walters

February Cleaning Teams:

- 3: Randy, Michele and Paul Sorenson
- 10: Tim Switzer and Bonnie Linaman, Randy & Paula Thoroughman
- 17: Wally & Charlene Aakre, Sam & Rebecca Cordova
- 24: Mike & Pam Baden, Darrell & Betty Bayer

Anyone who cannot clean at 9:00 AM on Saturday can clean on Thursday or Friday after 4:00 PM or exchange dates with others. If you do not have a key to the church, call the Board of Maintenance Coordinator, Wally Aakre, or the Church Office. Be sure to enter your name on the cleaning checklist when doing your cleaning.