



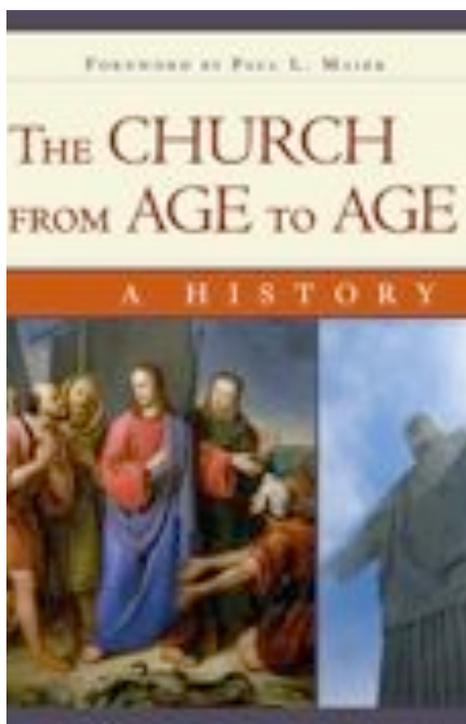
From Pastor's Desk 20+ Ways to Celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

1. Wake up and let the first words out of your mouth be: "CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!!"
2. Go to the Easter Sunrise service and rejoice in receiving the gifts that Easter brings to us.
3. Sing a lot of Alleluia's to make up for the Fast of Lent.
4. Pretend you are one of the women at the tomb and run and find someone to tell the news of the Resurrection.
5. Be Baptized/remember your Baptism.
6. Hide Easter eggs that are empty except for a small piece of paper with the words: Jesus is not here, He is Risen! (But have a pocket full of candy for kids who don't understand.)
7. Listen, REALLY listen, to the proclamation of the good news that Jesus lives so you will too.
8. Take an Easter lily to someone not able to come to church and visit with them a while.

Continued on Page 2

9. Give a ride to someone who otherwise can't make it to church.
10. EAT! It is a Feast day after all.
11. Eat at the Table of the Lord. That is the Feast of Feasts after all!
12. SING! Even if you can't (or think your can't).
13. Get to church early and read through the hymns in the Easter section of the hymnal.
14. Do 13, then ask the pastor to explain anything that doesn't make sense.
15. Hug your children, or someone else's.
16. Pray for the Church throughout the world, especially those who can't gather in freedom.
17. Go to the 9:00 AM Easter Day Divine Service and rejoice some more in receiving the gifts that Easter brings to us.
18. Sing one more Easter Hymn before you go to bed.
19. Get ready for bed and let the last words out of your mouth be "CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!!"
20. Pray with your spouse for steadfastness of faith in our risen Savior.
21. Repeat #1, 3, 4, 5, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, & 20 daily.
22. Repeat #11 & 17 weekly.



The Book of the Month The Church from Age to Age: A History

The Church from Age to Age examines key historic events from the time of the apostles through today. Informative and clearly written, readers of all ages will find the answers to the who, why, and how behind the current state of Christianity the world over. Maps, readings from primary sources, and an extensive bibliography, index, and timeline make this a complete one-volume resource for the classroom and for home.

“The Church from Age to Age is a marvelous survey text. Replete with a lengthy, detailed timeline, fifteen different maps, lists of popes, eastern patriarchs, church councils and

assemblies, peppered with primary source readings and, most importantly, founded on a meaty, spiritually edifying, and global historical narrative, it offers students of all kinds a wealth of information in a reader-friendly format. Though produced by confessional Lutherans from a Protestant point of view, it is accurate, reliable, and much broader in scope than most traditional Protestant histories. Its global frame of reference will be especially helpful to many. I strongly recommend this text for use in Christian colleges, seminaries, churches, and Protestant homes around the world. I will certainly be using it in my own teaching ministry.”

—Douglas A. Sweeney

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

From the President A Simple Way to Pray

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

After about a year and a half in this position, I've discovered that, if nothing else, being Synod president does tend to improve one's prayer life. A prayer Luther often prayed at night says it all: "My dear God, now I lie down and turn Your affairs back to You; You may do better with them. If You can do no better than I, You will ruin them entirely. When I awake, I will gladly try again."

Because of a feisty barber named Peter Beskendorf, we not only know exactly how Martin Luther prayed, but we have what is probably the greatest and most practical little pamphlet ever written on how regular folks can pray: "A Simple Way to Pray" (Luthers Works, v. 43, pp. 189211). While Luther was getting lathered in the barber's chair, Peter asked the Reformer how he went about praying. Luther gave Peter the low-down in the chair and then sat down and peeled off his little book shortly thereafter. Because there are so many unbiblical things said and written about prayer all about us, every Lutheran should have "A



The genius of Luther's approach is that it anchors prayer in the biblical or biblically based text so that it doesn't float off into self-absorbed drivel, quite disconnected from God's mandates and promises in the Bible.

"Simple Way to Pray" and read it. Luther's little book on prayer will revolutionize your prayer life.

The genius of Luther's approach is that it anchors prayer in the biblical or biblically based text so that it doesn't float off into self-absorbed drivel, quite disconnected from God's mandates and promises in the Bible. Luther's approach balances the issue of order and freedom, written prayer and ex corde prayer—but in such a

way that the biblical text determines the content and inspires the mind to pray freely as the Spirit moves.

Luther followed a simple, fourfold pattern:

- Instruction**
- Thanksgiving**
- Confession**
- Prayer**

Continued on Page 4



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Continued from Page 3

I call it I.T.C.P. This is how Luther prayed the Small Catechism--something I'd long heard about but had not the slightest idea what it meant. Virtually any text of the Bible can be prayed this way, or for that matter, any biblically based prayer.

I invite you to pray daily with me the greatest prayer ever written (aside from those in the Bible): The Litany (LSB 288–89). This 1500-year-old prayer, which Luther loved, covers the extent of real spiritual and physical need for the Church and the world. And it's all right out of the Bible. When you come to the following text, let Luther's I.T.C.P. mode kick in. Heres an example: We poor sinners implore you . . . to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your whole-some Word and to sustain them in holy living

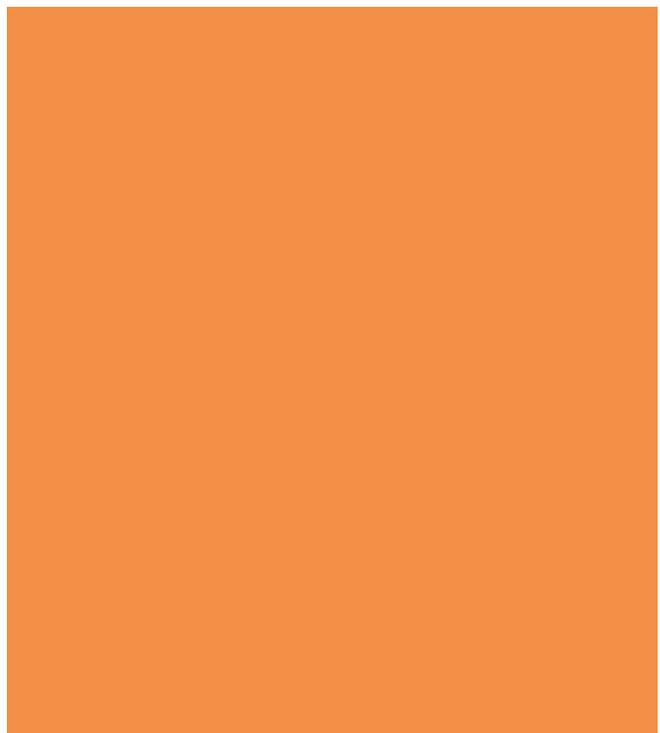
Lord, You **INSTRUCT** us that it is Your deepest desire that pastors love and stick to Your Word, for themselves and for others. It's horrible when a pastor forsakes the Word and falls into error or gross sin and does untold damage in the Church. We also know that it is Your deepest desire, Lord, that we pray for our pastors.

Lord, I give You **THANKS** for my pastor and all pastors of the Church. In this crazy day and age, it's a miracle that I have a pastor who believes the Bible, preaches Law and Gospel, loves his people and serves me and my family.

Lord, I **CONFESS** that I fail to pray for my pastor. I don't even think about our seminaries until we have a vacancy. I've been stingy in supporting my pastor. I have not always put the best construction on his actions and have failed to follow Matthew 18 when I've had a concern. I have disregarded the fact that You have placed this man to dole out your previous gifts of the Gospel to me.

Lord, I **PRAY**, enlighten me by Your Word and Spirit. Be with my pastor, and strengthen him today. Cause him to love your wholesome Word. Protect him and his wife and family from the evil one. Sustain him in holy living, and give him joy in his vocation. Cause me to be a source of joy in his ministry, and give me a generous heart that I may support the ministry of the Gospel in this place in every way. Amen.

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Education Corner

Faith, Culture, and Youth

By Dr. Adam Francisco

Much could be said about the age in which we live. Some describe it as an age of global instability. Others view things a bit more optimistically, calling it the new era of global responsibility. Still others characterize it as the age of information. For the Church and Christianity in the West, however, one thing is pretty clear. We live in what many are now calling a post-church or post-Christian era.

The influence and, in many respects, the authority the Church and classic Christian beliefs once exerted on individuals and the broader culture has dwindled to the point of insignificance.

This may seem odd, for national surveys suggest that the strong majority of Americans—about 76 percent—identify themselves as Christian. How can it be, then, that Christianity is on the decline?

Probing the content of our religious beliefs, several recent studies indicate that, while professing to be Christian, a majority of Americans maintain beliefs inconsistent with Christianity. For example, the Pew Forum found that 65 percent of Americans believe that “many religions can lead to eternal life.” Although more eastern in its theological orientation, over half of these individuals also identified themselves as Christian.

Nowhere is the erosion of classic Christian beliefs and values more evident than amongst our nation’s youth. The Barna Group recently found, after more than a decade of research, that very few kids from the mosaic generation (those born between 1984 and 2002) even have what one might call a Christian or biblical worldview. Few believe there are fixed moral truths, the Bible is totally authoritative, salvation is through faith in Christ, and God is omniscient and omnipotent.

This and other comparable studies all illustrate an alarming trend: While younger kids

largely assume the beliefs of their parents, the older they become, the more inclined they are to embrace ideas at odds with Christian beliefs. The Barna research even suggests that by their late teens and early twenties less than 1 percent of youth actually maintain basic biblical beliefs.

So, what are kids thinking these days? And why are they thinking the way they do?

A ‘MAP OF THE WORLD’

One way to understand the way a person thinks is to examine their worldview. Worldviews are conceptual maps that purport to explain the true nature of the universe and life within it, either by a story or in a set of propositions. More important, perhaps, they also help one interpret and explain one’s place in and relationship to God, the world, and other people.

As theoretical as all this sounds, one should not think that worldviews are irrelevant when discerning how kids think. It is true that few young people (or adults) can articulate every aspect of their worldview. But they—like all people—still think and act in light of it.

One of the most influential worldviews that predominates youth—and broader American—culture is post-modernism. Although it is notoriously difficult to define, one of its main features is its rejection of any worldview as the true one. And any worldview or person claiming to have a corner on the truth is typically viewed with suspicion and cynicism.

Postmodernism has, in many ways, led youth, while wanting to keep up religious appearances, to think about God and religion in a unique and ambivalent way. Survey responses indicate they largely see God as a distant being. They may acknowledge that He created the universe in one way or another. He can intervene in human affairs, and even be reached through prayer. Yet, He mostly remains aloof and disinterested. Also, according to this

worldview, the highest goal in life for humans is happiness. This, along with being nice and kind, is what defines a moral person. And since morality is found in all religions, this view puts most if not all religions on an equal footing.

In this way of framing reality, religion and spirituality provide an escape, or therapy, for the individual and his quest—a quest, not for truth, but happiness. Jesus may figure into this worldview; however, He is largely regarded as a great moral example, or perhaps as a personal spiritual confidant, but not as the one and only Son of God whose death paid for the sins of humankind. It is presumed that all moral people will be saved.

Specialists in youth culture from the National Study of Youth and Religion have labeled this worldview, in the award-winning *Soul Searching: The Religion and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, as “moralistic therapeutic deism.” Interestingly, a more recent follow-up study, entitled *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, has found that the views of God and religion of the youth studied in *Soul Searching* grow even more ambivalent and complacent as they get older. What is most unsettling about this and other comparable studies is that they indicate many young adults who are ambiguous and uncommitted to any religious convictions were at one time during their youth active in church.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

What happened? There is no single discernable cause. A number of factors have contributed to the decline in Christian beliefs amongst youth. But perhaps the most startling one is detailed in Britt Beemer and Ken Ham’s *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It*. This study found that many formerly churched youth and young adults were active in youth group, Bible study, and worship. Somewhere along the line, though, their faith was challenged by the claims of evolutionary science, revisionist history, and various worldly philosophies in the classroom, on the Internet, in their social circle, and elsewhere. Over time, unequipped for such

challenges, they grew complacent and, in some cases, rejected the faith of their childhood.

The studies referred to above were all nationwide surveys. They do not speak for youth everywhere. Yet, they are a cause for concern, for there are a number of ideologies competing for young minds. Postmodern indifference toward religion is just one of them. Analysts also have noticed a rise in an aggressive and assertive form of atheism. Buddhism, paganism, and other world religions and philosophies also purport to offer equally viable spiritual alternatives to Christianity.

What this suggests is the need for a more robust approach to Christian education. In addition to teaching youth the content of the Christian faith, it also is necessary to devote time to equipping youth in the task of defending their faith. Are youth capable of this? Spend some time with them, and you will find out that our church is filled with remarkable kids who have tremendous intellectual abilities. Likewise, we have outstanding schools, youth ministries, and, of course, congregations where exceptional catechesis and Christian education takes place. Yet, the further we make our way into this post-Christian or post-church era, the more it will be necessary to address specific challenges of the age, to “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5 ESV). The apostle Peter likewise enjoins Christians to “honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

There is indeed much work to be done. From the beginning, however, it is important to remember that the formation of the Christian mind is from beginning to end the work of God working through means. The Christian life begins, is nurtured, and sustained in, through, and by Baptism, the hearing, receiving, and learning of the Word of God, and the reception of the Lord’s Supper. Kids these days, just like adults, need to be daily reminded of this as they navigate the age in which we live.

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Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

1 Apr Joan Vukelich – West
Laverl Byers - East
8 Apr(S) Becky Kappes – West
Tim & Teri Pollock – East
8 Apr(9) Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
15 Apr Jim Dyer – West
Joan Vukelich – East
22 Apr Laverl Byers – West
Becky Kappes – East
6 May Joan Vukelich – West
Laverl Byers – East
13 May Becky Kappes – West
Tim & Teri Pollock – East
20 May Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell –East
27 May Jim Dyer – West
Joan Vukelich – East

Coffee Committee

Apr Pastor & Lauren Braaten
May Arleigh & Mary Jane Jones

Altar Committee

1 Apr Sharon Allen
5 Apr Sharon Allen

6 Apr Mary Appleby
7 Apr Mary Appleby
8 Apr (Sunrise) Mary Appleby
8 Apr (9am) Janice Arthur
15 Apr Janice Arthur
22 Apr Janice Arthur
29 Apr Carol Munson
6 May Carol Munson
13 May Carol Munson
17 May (Ascension) Donna Campbell
20 May Donna Campbell
27 May Donna Campbell

Elder On Duty – Communion

5 Apr Greg Nau
6 Apr Geof Danielson
7 Apr Josh Whitson
8 Apr (Sunrise) Greg Nau
8 Apr (9am) Geof Danielson
15 Apr Josh Whitson
22 Apr Josh Whitson
29 Apr Greg Nau
6 May Greg Nau
13 May Greg Nau
17 May (Ascension) Geof Danielson
20 May Geof Danielson
27 May Geof Danielson

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
4 Mar	17	87	\$3,615.10	\$0.00	\$180.00
7 Mar	45	0	\$427.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
11 Mar	21	70	\$1,557.76	\$0.00	\$0.00
14 Mar	44	0	\$235.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
18 Mar	20	85	\$2,547.85	\$0.00	\$0.00
21 Mar	58	0	\$497.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
25 Mar	21	84	1,901.08	\$0.00	\$0.00
28 Mar	51	0	\$234.25	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	277	326	11015.01	\$0.00	\$180.00
Total	603		\$11015.01	\$0.00	\$180.00

In This Issue . . .

From Pastor's Desk	1
Book of the Month	2
From President Harrison	4
Education Corner	6



Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.